

BRIARCLIFF QUARTERLY

FRENCH WAR-TIME WRITING EDITED BY WILLIAM
MEAD: JULES ROMAINS ANDRE GIDE SAINT-
JOHN PERSE PAUL VALERY DENIS DE ROUGE-
MONT JEAN MALAQUAIS PIERRE EMMANUEL
LOUIS ARAGON PAUL ELUARD JULES SUPER-
VIELLE PIERRE-JEAN JOUVE PAUL CLAUDEL
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AUSTRALIA BURNS MAGAZINES!

8

FIFTY CENTS

INTRODUCTION

The French spirit has historically been a reality known, felt and valued the world around as the fountainhead of civilization, of culture, of the elevation of the free human soul. What the impact upon it has been in these dire years of war, how it has survived its years of trial, what the new expressions of that spirit may promise for the future—these are questions urgently in the minds of all lovers of France, of all well-wishers for the springs of inspiration which well up out of French soil.

It is in the effort to answer such questions as these—in the effort to record and assemble the often conflicting testimony of utterance by the writers of France, new and old—that this unusual, timely and representative issue has been prepared.

It is worthy of note, and of an explicit word of high praise, that at such a time, William Mead, of the University of Maryland, should as a result of a year's devoted labors have been able, quite unaided, to bring together and to translate this vigorous mirroring of the French spirit at the war's end.

—THE EDITORS

The *Briarcliff Quarterly* is published in January, April, July and October by Briarcliff Junior College, Briarcliff Manor, New York. Norman Macleod, *Editorial and Publication Director*; John W. Fatula, *Assistant Editorial Director*; William Mead, *Guest Editor*; Jane Stone, *Guest Associate*; Carolyn Paisley, *Editor*; Meredith Murdock, Caroline Cohen, Ann Cook, and Ginny Hill, *Associate Editors*; Helen Nelson, *Advertising Director*; Susie Stoepel, *Assistant Advertising Director*; Nancy MacColl, *Circulation Director*; Hattie Huff, *Assistant Circulation Director*; Mary Thomas, *Art Director*; Joan Irwin, Clara Buffum, Eva Price, Marjorie Milne, Shirley Ward, Barbara Gutman, Enid Oonk, Marjorie Marlowe, Helen Owen, Ann Lowry, Alicia Tyson, Charlotte Barrett, Sally Hall, Elaine Hoffman, Louise Lewis, Shirley Lenci, *Associates*; Crieff Williamson and Denys Val Baker, *British Editorial Representatives*; William Maclellan, 240 Hope Street, Glasgow, C.2, Scotland, *British Business Agent*. Subscriptions \$2.00 a year. Single copies 50c. Checks and money orders should be made payable to Briarcliff Junior College. Editorial and Publication Offices at Briarcliff Junior College, Briarcliff Manor, New York. Entered as second class matter March 10, 1945, at the Post Office at Briarcliff Manor, New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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BRIARCLIFF QUARTERLY

VOL. II

JANUARY, 1946

No. 8

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"LITERATURE ABSOLUTELY CREATES AND CRYSTALLIZES THE FEELING AND POSSIBILITIES OF EMOTIONS IN THE AGE. FOR THIS REASON THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE NINETEENTH WAS WRITING ABOUT. FOR THIS REASON OUR POETS MAY NOT BE GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD FOR ANOTHER HALF CENTURY. THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE VALIDITY OF THEIR WRITING. THAT POETRY IS BECOMING A MORE EXACT CRITICISM OF THE CONTEMPORARY MILIEU IS FOR US A SUPERLATIVE PROOF OF ITS VIGOR AND REASON. THE WORD EXPERIMENT IS A SLANDER TO THE ACCOMPLISHED FACT."

—DONAL MACKENZIE, European editor of *The Morada*, published from Gardone Sopra, Lago di Garda, Italy, 1931.

POETRY

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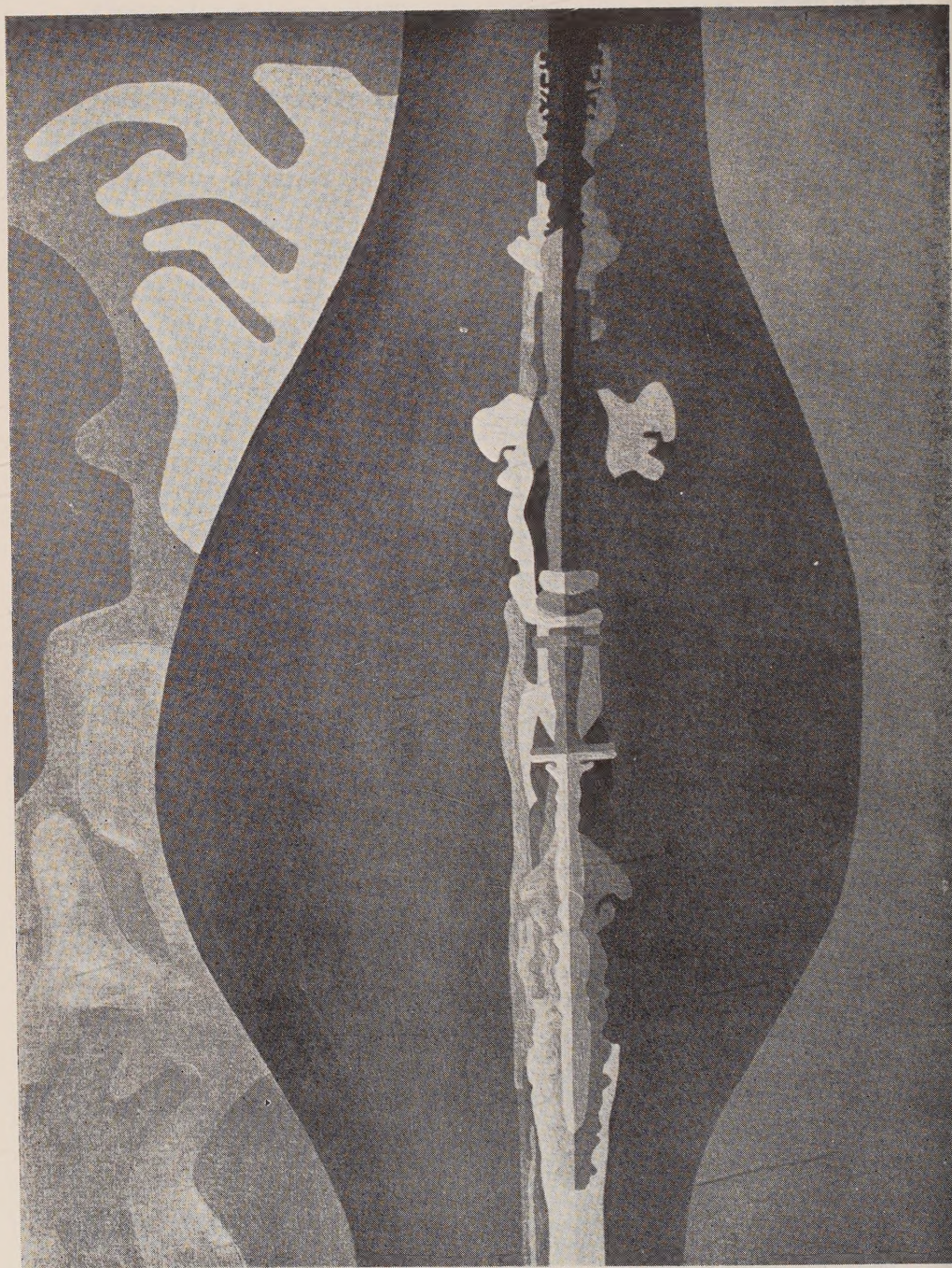
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NORTH CAROLINA 1945

Amédée Ozenfant

BRIARCLIFF QUARTERLY

CONTINUING THE MARYLAND QUARTERLY

Number Eight

PREFACE

When in the summer of 1943 *Fontaine* sent its American number from Algiers, we were uncertain as to what we could do that would equal the affirmation that such a gesture, made at such a time, represented for a dis-united world. To be sure there were then alliances and there was then propaganda; but this envoy had a mind of its own, and spoke for itself. *Ecrivains et Poètes des Etats-Unis* expressed a hope that international cooperation could be created in the only sphere where it would depend wholly upon honesty and sincerity and where it might have a chance of becoming permanent and fruitful—that of the intellect. This had been our hope; but once we had seen *Fontaine's* statement of it, it was no longer simply that. Sharing it in common, we too saw the obligation it placed upon us, and we too hoped to speak in such a way that our voice and that from the other side of the ocean would begin to sound like one.

Aspects of French Literature in War-Time is our attempt to fulfill this obligation. Prudence, more than anything else, influenced our choice of a title; we realized that even those strongly in favor of our purpose might be disappointed to find certain names missing from these pages had we allowed ourselves a less vague heading. So we confine ourselves to aspects, and locate ourselves in time. France has never ceased to value individual expression; her artists, from Rabelais to Gide, have devoted themselves to releasing the human spirit from whatever restricts it; her genius has been to transcend set forms even while creating them. Of the twenty-odd writers represented here some, it is true, might have been superficially banded together as Surrealists, as vers-librists, as raconteurs; as poets, as novelists, as critics. But it seems more exact and more comprehensive simply to say that we have brought them together here because they have all lived through the war years, and because each man has in his own way demonstrated that the spiritual liberty and genius of France are not impaired.

But we must say "because they were living in these years," not "because they specifically reflected them." If French writers have always been preoccupied with the problems of freedom, they have also had a preoccupation with those of expression. Their desire to tell the truth has been coupled with one to tell it correctly. They have reflected their times, but more frequently they have created them.

In one of the several prefaces printed with *Fontaine's* American number, Denis de Rougemont, after briefly comparing the literature of the United States and that of France concluded with this paragraph, which might well have been written to introduce our own number, to sum up and answer what has already been said here, and to point to the possible result of such activity:

"Which of the two literatures," he asks, "that which wants to act in the immediate present, or that which is more preoccupied with lasting, has the greater chance for a future in the world we are about to enter? I do not know. But I am sure that the French writer and the American writer have much to learn from one another. To me, they seem complementary, like virility and femininity, color and line, vital thrust and formal reserve. And I foresee the most fecund exchanges between these two principles of all civilization, polarized by our two literatures: tradition and timeliness, order and movement. Liberty is born from their alliance."

May this, then, begin these exchanges.

—WILLIAM MEAD

Paul Valéry

CONSEIL D'AMI

Verse en fin pur cristal un or fauve et sucré
Allume un feu. Songe un doux songe et fuis le Monde.
Ferme ta porte à toute amante, brune ou blonde.
Ouvre un livre à la pure extase consacré.

Délicieusement imagine. — Et Calcule
Que Rien peut-être, hormis ton Rêve, n'est Réel . . .
Caresse ton vieux chat, et regarde le Ciel
Dans ses yeux, verts miroirs du rose Crépuscule.

Puis, écoutant parler l'intérieure Voix,
Evoque le passé. Sommeille, lis ou bois,
Et n'ayant nul chagrin car tu n'as nulle envie
Sens à travers tes jours paisibles mais divers
A travers les printemps, les étés, les hivers
Paresseusement fuir le fleuve de ta Vie!

Georges Bernanos

LETTER TO FRENCHMEN

(This letter appeared in the second Cahier de Liberation (Fontaine, 1944), with the following note: "Nous sommes heureux de reproduire cette 'Lettre aux Français' rédigée par le grand écrivain Georges Bernanos à l'intention de la presse clandestine française.")

"Frenchmen, I am ashamed to begin thus in the style of proclamation the modest message I address to a small number of faithful friends, but absence and unhappiness have taught me to make no more distinctions among you, and, as soon as I turn my thoughts to my country, the word *Frenchmen* is the one which comes naturally to my lips, even before that of France, for you are France living and suffering, the only France which must count for us as long as historic France, imperishable France, our camps, our rivers, our cities are in the hands of the enemy.

"Whatever you hear said about me, be assured that I am not what your revolutionary ancestors called, a hundred years ago, by a term that is coming back into fashion, *an émigré*. When I left my country, in 1938, in the days of Munich, I lost nothing but it, because I had no possessions. Tomorrow I will have no career to take up again, nor fortune to regain, nor insult to avenge. It is true that once I foresaw and predicted the betrayal, but I could not praise myself for it before you—you who suffer it in your flesh and your blood, for it continues to devour you, and if you don't take care, if you don't pull out its roots, it will still devour you tomorrow. He who has sold himself once will always be for sale. Frenchmen, this too-often repeated word *Traitor* irritates certain of you. They find it doubtful, uncertain, equivocal. But that precisely is the triple character of treason. Treason has many different aspects, some of which do not repel the curious and even attract them—as do the phosphorescences and the changing colours of something rotting. If it can still be maintained that there were among us traitors of good faith, this only proves the extent and depth of the evil.

"Oh! Frenchmen, from this side of the earth, we see many things that you can only suspect. The fatal old man who dares call himself the French State is said to have declared one day that every good citizen must repeat with him each evening and each morning that France was conquered. This phrase has gone all over the world, and has instantly become an historical phrase like 'the guard dies and does not surrender.' All that hates us and is jealous of us has proclaimed him with great eulogies as if he were the model of prudence and realism. But millions of men have despaired of you, millions of men have told themselves that France was confessing that she had come to the end of her imagination and invention, that she would never again do something new, and it is as if they had despaired of hope. For while it is possible that you are disgusted with big words, if you want to know what these millions of men expect from your country, you will do better to ask Michelet or Victor Hugo than Renan or Maurras. We are perfectly free no longer to agree about the philosophical conceptions of Victor Hugo or Michelet, but we should all together, believers and unbelievers, thank the good God for having always permitted France to be for so many men the liberator, the emancipator, the redeemer.

"Oh! Frenchmen, among those who still smiled yesterday at those big words, there were perhaps some innocent ones. But as for those who laugh at them today—there are the lost consciences. For we do not reproach the men of Vichy with having believed or pretended to believe that they had the right to choose between the English and the Germans, we condemn them for having tried to make it believed that France,—like a little fund-holder ruined by a panic who places the rest of his fortune at life-interest in order to grow old in tranquility—would no longer concern itself with what was not its business—that is to say the happiness, the honor, the dignity of other men. Oh, Frenchmen, there is the crime, there is the insult. There too is the unpardonable fault, for the world has now more than ever need of you. If it is true that the electoral demogogy once abused this slogan, it does not matter. Today you do not see it pasted on the walls, you hear it in the mouth of a modest writer who asks nothing of you, and who does not lie to you. I swear to you that millions of men are thinking of your country, not doubtless with the same enthusiasm their great grandparents had, but with a faith deeper and more intimate because your country is doubted, and their faith survives doubt. There are millions of men for example who no longer believe in a certain progress, in ferocious progress which unchains at one time, as Goethe wrote, industries and wars. They oppose to it in the secret of their hearts this other notion of progress spread by our revolutionary legend, our historians and poets, once current in the whole civilized world before capitalism had made it the unique and

colossal stake of universal speculation, this progress of 'lights' whose name ceaselessly re-occurs in the notebooks of the States-General. Frenchmen, your Revolution once divided you; why would it not reconcile you tomorrow? Cannot one answer those who say that 1789 marks the coming of a new France by saying that it is also the last expansion of the old?

"The very formulas, imagined then to stir up Frenchmen against one another, were perhaps the expression of the national presentiment of the dangers to come. The cry of 'death to the tyrants,' the bombast of which makes us smile when we see it on flowered plates, is not far from having for us its true meaning—we who have seen the tyrants. And when the men of the sections proclaimed 'Liberty or death,' it was not against the staggering old monarchy that they hurled their defiance, but—without knowing it—against the monstrous modern state, ceaselessly oscillating between economic and military dictatorship. Rather die, they still say to us in a body from the depth of cemeteries in which are sleeping *pêle-mêle* aristocrats and reconciled *sans-culottes*, rather die than live all one's life as a protégé of the State, someone helped, someone assured, a minor, a pupil of the administration.

"Oh, Frenchmen, millions of men are waiting perhaps for nothing but your signal to take back to their account this tragic motto. Millions of men are beginning to understand that the undisciplined spirits Frenchmen have so been reproached for was an element indispensable to christian order, that the example of your legendary individualism preserved among other people, always haunted by the abject securities of slavery, if not the passion, at least a prejudice for liberty. Frenchmen, what the world expects from you is not that you conform, but that, on the contrary, you become yourselves again, such as God made you. May you soon be again, before the reformers of a tomorrow without generosity, without imagination, and without daring, what you were when you tore from your conqueror the celebrated cry of admiration and anger: 'Ah! insolent Nation!' "

Jean Wahl

INDIFFERENT LOVE

Sometimes so strong a bond is born between two beings
In the grief of their mutual indifference
In the misery of their stubborn solitude,
They have taken to the full the emptiness of being,
They are sorrowfully consecrated.

André Gide

OEDIPUS

ACT FIRST

*Many things are admirable, but nothing
is more admirable than man.*

Sophocles: Chorus from *Antigone*.

Oedipus

Here I am fully present, complete at this instant of the eternal duration, like someone who would come forward to the front of a theatre and say:

I Oedipus have lived forty years and have reigned twenty. By the strength of my fists I have reached the summit of happiness. A lost child, found, without civil state, without papers, my greatest satisfaction is that I owe my position to no one but myself. Happiness was not given to me; I conquered it. Then too infatuation lies in wait for me; and it was to avoid it that I first wondered if there were not some predestination in my case. Through fear of this dizziness of pride which makes certain captains (and not the least illustrious ones) stagger. . . . Oh, come! come! Oedipus, don't embark in long sentences which you risk not being able to leave. Say simply what you have to say and don't bring that very inflation to your words which you claim to avoid in your life. Everything is simple and everything gets to the point. Be simple yourself and direct as the arrow. Straight to the target. . . . That brings me back to what I was saying a little while ago: Yes, if I sometimes come to believe that I was launched by the gods, it is only to become more modest, and give them credit for my destiny. For, in my case precisely, it is rather difficult not to be a little self-inflated. I come to that in creating above myself a sacred power to which, whether I want to or not, I am submissive. Who would not submit himself to a sacred power when he saw it would lead him to where I am? A God leads you, Oedipus; and there are not two like you. This is what I tell myself Sundays and feast-days. The rest of the week, I don't find time to think about it. And then what good would it do? I reason badly; logic is not my stronghold; I proceed by intuition. There are some who ask themselves at the end of each field and in each traffic tie-up, Must I yield the step? Have I the right to go beyond? But I always act as if God were advising me.

(The chorus, divided into two groups, stands forward on the stage, at the right and left of Oedipus.)

The Chorus (Both groups)

We, the Chorus, whose particular mission in this place is to represent the opinion of the greatest number, declare that we are surprised and pained by the profession of so fierce an individuality. The feelings which Oedipus expresses would not be supported in other men, except when disguised.

Indeed, it is good to put the gods on one's side. But the surest way is to line oneself up with the priest. Oedipus would do well to consult Tiresias, for it is he who holds the gods on the alert. Oedipus, under a pretense of serving us, risks estranging them from us, and now being crushed. (*Softly.*) We will try, by means of some inexpensive sacrifices and some well directed prayers, to gain their indulgence and, by separating ourselves from our king, divert upon him alone the punishment that his haughtiness deserves.

The Chorus at the Right (to Oedipus)

That you are happy, although you say so a little too often, no one doubts. But we are not happy, we, your people; O Oedipus, we, your people, ah! no, we are not happy. We would like to hide that from you; but the action of this play could not get under way unless we brought you some most lamentable tidings. The plague, since it must be called by its name, continues to grieve the city. Your family has as yet been preserved; but it is fitting that a king should not lose interest in the misfortunes of his people, even when he is not directly touched by them.

The Chorus at the Left

For that matter, we are not far from thinking that your happiness and our unhappiness are joined in some mystic way; at least that is what the teaching of Tiresias permits us to foresee. It is a good thing that we are perfectly sure about that. Apollo must inform us. You yourself have been willing to send to the sanctuary of the God the excellent Creon, your brother-in-law, who will soon bring us the answer of the long-awaited oracle.

Oedipus

Here he comes now.

(Enter Creon.)

Oedipus (to Creon)

Well?

Creon

Wouldn't it be better if I spoke to you alone?

Oedipus

Why? You know that I despise masks and mental reservations. You can tell everything before us. I invite you to. I order you to. What can remedy the misfortunes of the people should be known by the people as well as by myself. It is only thus that it can help me to cure them. What did the oracle say?

Creon

Just what I had a presentiment of: there is something rotten in the kingdom.

Oedipus

Stop. The people is not enough. Have your sister Jocasta and our four children come hither.

Creon

Listen. I praise you for calling for Jocasta. You know how strong family feelings are in me. And then too, she will be able to give us some good advice. But the children seem too young to me to take part in the discussion.

Oedipus

Already Antigone is no longer a child. Eteocles and Polynices are what I was at their age; not in the least foolish, daring, and quick to make up their minds. It is good to put a little care into their heads. And as for Ismena, she will not understand.

(Enter Jocasta and Oedipus' four children.)

Oedipus (to Jocasta)

Your brother is back from Pytho. I wanted to have you all with me to hear the God's answer. Now Creon, come, speak: What did the oracle say?

Creon

That God will not turn his anger aside from Thebes until the late king Laius is revenged.

Oedipus

Revenged for what?

Creon

Don't you know that he whose place you have taken in the bed of Jocasta my sister, and on the throne, was murdered?

Oedipus

I know. But hasn't the criminal been punished?

Creon

The police couldn't get hold of him. And then, it must be admitted that no one looked very hard for him.

Oedipus (to Jocasta)

You didn't tell me. . . .

Jocasta

Every time I tried to speak to you of it, my dear, you interrupted me. No, don't speak of the past, you cried. I don't want to know about it. A golden age has begun. All things are made new. . . .

Creon

The word "justice" became, in your mouth, "amnesty."

Oedipus

If I knew the rat who. . . .

Jocasta

Calm yourself, dear. That is ancient history. Don't go back over the past.

Oedipus

No, I have no reason to be calm and I would like to have known all that sooner. By Hades, I will not stop until I have found the guilty man. Wherever he may hide, I will pursue him, and I swear he will not escape me. How long ago did that happen?

Jocasta

I had been a widow for six months when you succeeded Laius. That was twenty years ago.

Oedipus

Twenty years of happiness. . . .

Tiresias

. . . which are but a day in the sight of God.

(Tiresias, blind, dressed in a habit,
and accompanying Antigone and
Ismena, has entered unnoticed.)

Oedipus

Heavens! How troublesome he is! Forever meddling in other people's affairs! Who asked you to come?

Jocasta (to Oedipus)

My dear, you should not speak like that before the children. It is unwise to lessen the authority of someone we have given them as a master, and who must accompany them. (*Turning toward Tiresias*) You were saying. . . .

Tiresias

I wouldn't like to displease the king.

Oedipus

It's not so much what is said that displeases me, as what is thought and not said. Speak.

Tiresias

When we are alone, Oedipus, we will talk of your happiness, of what you call happiness. But now it is a question of the people's unhappiness. Oedipus, the people suffer, and its king should not be ignorant of it. Between the prosperity of a few and the misery of the greatest number, God weaves a mysterious bond. The name of God, Oedipus, is often in your mouth. For that, I do not blame you, of course; but rather for looking on God more as an approver than a judge; but rather for not trembling before Him.

Oedipus

I have never been a coward.

Tiresias

The more valiant a leader is before men, the more his trembling pleases God.

Oedipus

If I had trembled before the Sphinx, I would not have been able to answer it, and I would not have been king.

Both Choruses

Oedipus, Oedipus! It's useless. You know well that with Tiresias even a king cannot have the last word.

First Chorus

It cannot be doubted that you vanquished the Sphinx; but do you

remember that, afterwards, you claimed, for having solved the enigma, to be able to do without the revelation of birds?

Second Chorus

And, since they were disturbing our sleep, you got us into trouble by authorizing us to hunt them, in spite of the prohibitions of Tiresias.

Both Choruses

The hashed game was good; we understood that we had sinned when God, incensed, covered our crops with caterpillars.

First Chorus

And if we fasted that year, it was undoubtedly for penitence.

Second Chorus

But also because we no longer had anything to eat.

Both Choruses

So henceforth, fully inclined to obedience, we advise you to listen to Tiresias.

Oedipus (aside, to his two sons)

The people always prefer a mystic interpretation to a natural explanation. Nothing can be done about that. (*to Tiresias*) All right. Go to it.

Tiresias

The king's police can hunt for a criminal. But while waiting for it to find him, I exhort each one of you to penitence; for each one of you is guilty before God, and we could not imagine any man without blemishes. So, let each one descend into himself, examine himself, and repent. Meanwhile a few offerings will try to pacify Him whose wrath is so harshly trying the city. Already the dead are beyond number. Polynices, with whom I was just walking, will tell you, since I cannot see. . . .

Polynices

Yes, father, we surprised, not far from the palace, a group of infected men. Soiled with excrements and vomits, they twisted in frightful cramps, and seemed to be helping one another to die. The air all about resounded with their hiccoughs, their sobs, their sighs, and their looks. . . .

Creon

Enough! Enough! . . .

(*Ismena faints.*)

Oedipus

Look! Now the little one is ill.

Eteocles (to Polynices)

You shouldn't have told that before your sister.

Oedipus (to Jocasta)

Please, take the children away.

(Tiresias leaves with them.)

Let the people go, too. I am going to try to think.

(Oedipus is alone with Creon.)

Creon

Inconsistent, like all impulsive men. What about the oath you were swearing a little while ago?

Oedipus

What oath?

Creon

You see, you've already forgotten it. But the people, and your children are there to remember it; and Tiresias is there to remind you of it. The oath to avenge the death of the king.

Oedipus

That's so. Why hasn't the criminal been hunted?

Creon

The business was hushed up.

Oedipus

By whom?

Creon

By myself at first, who was acting as regent. I did not think it prudent to attract the people's attention to it, and to let it see that a king can be killed like any other man.

Oedipus

Yes; but now it knows.

Creon

And Jocasta did not want to conduct an enquiry, for she considered, with great wisdom, that the beginning of your reign should not be shadowed.

Oedipus

Jocasta has always been careful to preserve my happiness. She is perfect, Jocasta. What a wife! What a mother! As for me, who have never known my own, I have for her a love half filial and conjugal at one time. Tell me . . . her first husband, did she love him?

Creon

Assuredly much less than you.

Oedipus

And then too . . . had they no children?

Creon

Oh, that's a long story. I don't know if I should speak to you about it. . . .

Oedipus

Then, you had to tell me nothing. Now, I want to know.

Creon

Well, here it is: they did not want to have any children because the oracle. . . .

Oedipus

The oracle again!

Creon

. . . had predicted that Laius would be stabbed by his son. But one jolly evening, carelessly . . .

Oedipus

I see. And this child of drunkenness, what became of him?

Creon

It was a son. He was, right after his birth, given to a shepherd whose mournful duty it was to abandon him in the mountains, where the animals devoured him.

Oedipus

Is this shepherd still living?

Creon

You're asking me too much. Do you want my advice? Don't worry about that. Live tranquilly.

Oedipus

With this thorn in my pillow, I'm afraid I shall no longer sleep well. And then, you heard it, the gods ask that the murderer be punished.

Creon

My dear Oedipus, the oracles, good as they are for the people, could not deceive us. We governors should take a reinforcement of power from them, and turn them to our uses. Laius was, they said, to be murdered by his son; and it was the son who was done away with. But Laius is dead, you will object. If he had lived, you would not have been able to sit on his throne. So do not begin to grieve today for his loss, nor to disturb yourself to find out how he died. If someone killed him, it was for you; he played his hand; you should not punish him, but on the contrary reward him.

Oedipus

But what would Tiresias say?

Creon

Are you afraid of him?

Oedipus

Not exactly. But the people listen to him. And his voice troubles me, sometimes; yes, the sound of his voice; you'd say it came from the underworld. Here he is again. He comes without anyone's ever hearing him approach. What do you want of us, Tiresias?

(Tiresias has come in.)

Tiresias

Oedipus. The queen would like to speak to you. She is waiting for you in the palace.

(Oedipus draws away. To Creon.)

It is also so that he will leave us alone. I heard all that you were saying.

Creon

Were you listening?

Tiresias

I do not need to listen to hear. Even before hearing the voices I already know the thoughts. Creon, it is not good to reassure Oedipus.

Creon

What do you mean?

Tiresias

That he is only too tranquil now. His soul is like a closed vase; no fear can enter it. In the fear of God lies my power. His tranquil happiness is impious. You must crack this happiness a little.

Creon

Why?

Tiresias

Through this disturbing crack, God will enter into his heart. Eteocles and Polynices escape me; I feel it more each day. Jocasta will tell you; taking their father as an example, they believe that they can emancipate themselves from a power to which it is important that each man remain submissive. I do not speak to you in my own name, but in the name of the God I represent; then in the name of Jocasta and of the pious Antigone, finally in the name of the people which is horrified and which sees in the flail which scourges it a punishment for the incredulity of its king. Furthermore, how could Antigone venerate a father, or Jocasta love a husband whose heart is turned aside from the God that both revere? You yourself, Creon, must understand that it is in the interest of all that a king bow before a superior power in which, though it be against him, each man may find resource.

(Jocasta enters.)

Jocasta

Oedipus is consternated by the news I have just given him. Antigone wishes to enter holy orders.

Creon

Vestal!

Tiresias

Nothing astonishing about that. The dear child hopes to balance in that way the impiousness of her father.

Jocasta

She confided this plan to me, which must remain a secret, and of which her brothers know nothing as yet.

Creon

Ah! The poor child!

Tiresias

Why poor? She will find in God a much more certain happiness than Oedipus', a holy felicity made from humility, not pride.

Creon

I think, too, that the misfortunes of the people have affected her.

Jocasta

She begged me to let her care for the sick. I protested that that could not be the occupation of a princess. "Then to pray for them, to intercede for them," she told me; and then, as she was adding in a lower tone: "and perhaps also for . . ." her tears kept her from finishing.

Tiresias

For someone who is more ill than they.

Creon

Was she thinking of her father?

Tiresias

Beyond a doubt. How did Oedipus take that?

Jocasta

At first, he was furious and pained at one time. Then he cried that he recognized the handwork of Tiresias.

Tiresias

I am only the instrument of God; but since it is through me that he works, my labours will not end there.

Jocasta

So much constancy, and so much virtue and courage in a beloved husband. . . . To bring these things to God, I do feel, O Tiresias, that that is where our dearest duty lies.

Tiresias

Creon must help me. He will shake the king's confidence, so that he will be better disposed to hear my words.

Creon

I am willing to try; but I cannot answer for my success. Oedipus does not willingly listen to someone who bothers him.

Tiresias

God will inspire you, as he does me, with the way to touch him to the quick.

Picasso



LETTE DEBOUT SUR UN CHEVAL

Picas
(Courtesy of the Cone Collection)



SIN pour "Les Musiciens

Fernand Léger

Creon

God has never inspired me to any extent.

Tiresias

He inspires only the blind perfectly.

Jocasta

I give myself up to you, Tiresias, through whom we know the will of the All-Highest.

Louis Aragon

LISTEN FRANCE

Listen France someone would sing a French song
Deep August murmurs in the heart of the forest
A love which resembles our own trait for trait
Listen France someone would say that another has your secret

The distant music has the accent of home
This whiteness is the dawn and all here recalls
Aude with her white arms surrounding dead Roland
So that the little moorish horses should not cross
This handsome boy who hurled the stones so well

How near it is to my heart this distant music
It is the redoubled echo of bleeding yesterday
In it Jean d'Arc thrills to new voices
And in the eyes of the people of today I see
Xaintrailles washing his forehead in the fountain

Have drunken words become strangers
It is not latin that is taught at the school
It's the drum rolling still on the bridge of Arcole
It's Bara it's Kleber and this mad clamor
This holy clamor the fatherland in danger

Listen France someone would say your voice is no longer alone
The sky is less obscure misfortune is less weighty

You are silent you are silent like the peasant
Who knows that his hope is like a partisan
Hidden his heart beating in the straw of haystacks

The sun of Valmy soon will rise
We had forgotten in the night of shipwreck
What in French is to work with a will
It is contagious the example of courage
Next winter will be cutting like a knife

Jules Romains

CLANRICARD TELLS THE CHILDREN ABOUT EUROPE'S GREAT PERIL

This section is taken from the twenty-seventh and last volume of Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté, "Le 7 Octobre," which is still unpublished. The entire action of the first volume, "Le 6 Octobre," took place during one day, October 6, 1908. In like manner, the action of this last volume takes place on October 7, 1933, or twenty-five years and one day after that of the first volume.

The readers of Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté will surely remember that one chapter in this first volume already bore the title: "Clanricard tells the children about Europe's great peril." Clanricard was then a young instructor in a Montmartre school. Twenty-five years have passed. Now he is a principal, still in Montmartre. But his preoccupations, through the misfortunes of the times have, alas! remained or become again the same.

One of Clanricard's rules is to make on the average two visits a year to the teachers of his school, and to their pupils, during school-hours. The first visit comes at the beginning of the year, the second towards the end. He attends classes; he questions the pupils. But above all he talks to them. He avoids dealing directly with the work on the program, for he does not want to seem to be doing the teacher's lesson, or to be correcting him. He talks on a subject inspired by the occasion or the circumstances of the times. The other day he explained to the little boys of Montmartre, apropos a sentence come upon in a text, why painting was an eminent art, and why they should be proud that the name of their quarter was linked with the history of painting.

Today, he will visit M. Michel. M. Michel, teacher of the second

form, has just been appointed to the school. He is a normal graduate from Auteuil. His record is most favorable. He seems a little timid. Clanricard did not go to see him just at first, so that he would not think that the visit showed some special superintendence over the newcomer, and so that the class would have time to be taken into hand.

Clanricard's impression is good. He has listened for about twenty minutes to the new teacher's lesson, and has cut in with a few questions for the pupils. He has greatly appreciated Michel's gift for exposition. Above all he has paid attention to the pupils, to the relationships which have already been established between them and the teacher, to the habit they have formed of receiving his influence. Michel is gentle, and perhaps timid. But he is active. He charms this little audience. He doesn't lose sight of it. He is timid, but vigilant. He will not have an iron discipline. He will parley a little too much with the unruly boys. But one need not be afraid of great incidents; and on the whole the class will work as it should. For that matter, Clanricard will whisper into Michel's ear, as soon as they are alone: "I'm most content with what I've seen. Everything is going to go all right. . . . If you happen to have the slightest difficulty with anyone, let me know immediately. I'm here to help you. I won't fail to do so."

He begins to speak, without leaving the modest chair in which he is sitting, between the blackboard and the first row:

"Children, you have just heard an *excellent* lesson," he emphasizes the word, "to which I can add nothing. And then the object of my visits is not, as you know, to interfere with the teaching given you, which is almost always perfect. But I like to reestablish contact with you . . . too rarely to my liking . . . with you who are my children, whom I have known for years. I like to chat a little . . . and, M. Michel will forgive me, to chat about things that are not always on the program of the certificate of studies. I have even sometimes been reproached, it seems, for having entered upon subjects which are not suitable to your age. But I know you better than do the people who say that. I know quite well what you are capable of understanding.

"Look, last night, before I went to sleep, some reflections I made during vacation came back to me, and I thought: 'I'll talk about these tomorrow with my little friends in the second form, since I'm going to see them.'

"You don't read the papers, I presume, or at least you don't read them thoroughly. But you hear people talking around you. You know then that the general situation in Europe is not good. There are several countries, two especially, which are very dangerous. They have suppressed all liberties within their borders, and it is impossible to see clearly what their intentions are from without. But they are probably bad intentions.

Nothing in that could particularly astonish you who study history. You recognize situations which have been produced in many epochs.

"But the present situation is worse in several different respects. First of all any new war would be more terrible and more destructive than those of the past. You are aware of this. It's an effect of scientific and industrial progress. But there is something else. I will try to make you understand it.

"Imagine that around twenty-five years ago—it must be exactly twenty-five years, and it was almost the same day of the year, just after the return of the classes. . . . I was a young instructor, yes, younger than M. Michel, at the school in the rue Sainte-Isaure, you know, behind the Butte. I had just read my paper. I had read those of the days before. The news was not good. Already in the Balkans and elsewhere the first shocks which, growing larger and larger, were to give us the great catastrophe of 1914 had begun. I couldn't keep myself from talking about that, about these bad signs, about my anguish, with your little 1908 comrades." His voice changed: "I can't forget that four or five of them, at least, the oldest, were conscripted or joined up towards the end of the war, and that two were killed. . . . So, I tried to make them feel that it was serious. . . . But I well remember that this was in my mind: 'Around these children, in their families, people perhaps tend to take rather too lightly these forerunning signs, and even a war which might follow them. Perhaps certain parents read nationalist papers, which excite them and blind them. . . . A sensible word brought from school by a child sometimes has a little influence.' Look, here's another memory, which touches you more closely: three months later, Juarès, the great Juarès, spoke in the yard of our school, yes, right here. You can tell your parents about that. More than one of them must remember it, for that matter. It was a meeting for the peace of Europe. I was there, of course. Juarès—with his magnificent eloquence—addressed us as if we were people who could do something against the danger. He asked us to combat the disorders of opinion, to bring needed pressure to bear upon our government. He addressed, beyond the frontiers, the working class of all countries. He showed it that by its clear-sighted resistance it could prevent war among peoples. . . .

"That's just what is saddening about it, children. It is no longer a question of addressing oneself to the popular masses of other countries, of trying to move them, of supplicating them to fight with us against the approach of a new catastrophe. Your papas have surely spoken in your presence of these immense manifestations which have taken place in Germany in the last few months, particularly these truly frightful festivals at Nüremberg. Perhaps you have seen photos. Multitudes of a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand men, lined up as for a parade, frozen at attention or rather acclaiming with a single bellowing this

madman Hitler who preaches revenge, persecutes the Jews as in the Middle ages, and burns books. . . . Yes, that's what makes the popular masses vibrate now, in Germany and elsewhere.

"What then is left for us to do? We wonder. In other times, we might tell ourselves: 'Our government has committed culpable, even criminal, imprudences. It is not working for peace. It too is entering suspicious international combinations. . . . It is bringing its torch to the blaze . . . ' to recall a famous image of Jaurès' . . . 'Let us begin by acting against it. This will be one less trump for war, one torch that we will have put out.'

"Today, nothing of the kind. I don't say that to flatter our government. I don't need to flatter it. I have nothing to expect of it and nothing to fear from it. M. Michel will tell you that our country is profoundly free, that ours is one of the only ones, alas! that so remains . . . and that instruction, in particular, is not subject to the slightest control. So much so that one can wonder if this does not sometimes go to an extreme. I don't know what M. Michel thinks, but for my part I do not think it normal that a teacher should publicly teach anti-patriotism. That is not his role. But you see to what point we are free, since such a question rises. . . . Well, it is clear that our government wants only peace, and is on the watch for every opportunity, or what seem opportunities, which could consolidate peace. . . . France is doing all she can, but the others facing her, friends or enemies, either help it poorly to cope with the perils of Europe, or are rightly suspected of working to increase them.

"Today, at the table, you will perhaps say: 'The principal came to see us, and he even talked with us for a long time.' Your Papa will ask you: 'What did he find to talk to you about?' 'He told us that he was greatly troubled by the perils that are mounting up in Europe; that he was sure that France had the best of intentions and was doing all that it could, but that the others weren't doing their part.' Your Papa will answer: 'Very nice! We've come a good ways! And what does he advise then, your principal? Has he at least given a conclusion?' Then, children, you can repeat for him this little conclusion . . . oh! which isn't worth much, but I wonder what the great Jaurès himself, if he were living, could find: 'Since we think that France is in the right, and since we no longer have, so to speak, the resource of acting upon others, let us be as little divided as possible, so as not to weaken ourselves too much.' That is all. Let's not be too demanding when it's only a question of our material interests. Our society could be better arranged, oh! that is quite true. But it is still very pleasant if one compares it with others . . . with others which would have quickly imposed their tyranny upon us, if they had believed they could strike a successful blow without too much risk."

Saint-John Perse
POÈME A L'ETRANGERE

"Alien Registration Act"

1

Les sables ni les chaumes n'enchanteront le pas des siècles à venir,
où fut la rue pour vous pavée d'une pierre sans mémoire — ô pierre
inexorable et verte plus que n'est
le sang vert des Castilles à votre tempe d'Etrangère!

Une éternité de beau temps pèse aux membranes closes du silence,
et la maison de bois qui bouge, à fond d'abîme, sur ses ancrs, mûrit
un fruit de lampes à midi
pour de plus tièdes couvaisons de souffrances nouvelles.

Mais les tramways à bout d'usure qui s'en furent un soir au tournant
de la rue, qui s'en furent sur rails au pays des Atlantes, par les chaussées
et par les rampes
et les ronds-points d'Observatoires envahis de sargasses,

par les quartiers d'eaux vives et de Zoos hantés des gens de cirques, par
les quartiers de nègres et d'Asiates aux migration d'alevins, et par les
beaux solstices verts des places rondes comme attolls,
(là où campait un soir la cavalerie des Fédéraux, ô mille têtes
d'hippocampes!)

chantant l'hier, chantant l'ailleurs, chantaient le mal à sa naissance,
et, sur deux notes d'Oiseau-chat, l'Été boisé des jeunes Capitales infestées
de cigales . . . Or voici bien, à votre porte, laissés pour compte à
l'Etrangère,

ces deux rails, ces deux rails—d'où venus?—qui n'ont pas dit leur
dernier mot.

"Rue Gît-le-cœur . . . Rue Gît-le-cœur . . ." chante tout bas
l'Alienne sous ses lampes, et ce sont là méprises de sa langue d'Etrangère.

2

" . . . Non point des larmes—l'aviez-vous cru?—mais ce mal de la
vue qui nous vient, à la longue d'une trop grande fixité du glaive sur
toutes braises de ce monde,

(ô sabre de Strogoff à hauteur de nos cils!)

peut-être aussi l'épine, sous la chair, d'une plus jeune ronce au coeur des femmes de ma race; et j'en conviens aussi, l'abus de ces trop longs cigares de veuve jusqu'à l'aube, parmi le peuple de mes lampes,

dans tout ce bruit de grandes eaux que fait la nuit du Nouveau Monde.

. . . Vous qui chantez—c'est votre chant—vous qui chantez tous bannissements au monde, ne me chanterez-vous pas un chant du soir à la mesure de mon mal? un chant de grâce pour mes lampes,

un chant de grâce pour l'attente, et pour l'aube plus noire au coeur des althaeas?

De la violence sur la terre il nous est fait si large mesure . . . ô vous, homme de France, ne ferez-vous pas encore que j'entende, sous l'humaine saison, parmi les cris des martinets et toutes cloches ursulines, monter dans l'or des pailles et dans la poudre de vos Rois

un rire de lavandières aux ruelles de pierre?

. . . Ne dites pas qu'un oiseau chante, et qu'il est, sur mon toit, vêtu de très beau rouge comme Prince d'Eglise. Ne dites pas—vous l'avez vu—que l'écureuil est sur la véranda, avec le paper-boy, les Soeurs quêteuses et le laitier. Ne dites pas qu'à fond de ciel

un couple d'aigles, depuis hier, tient la Ville sous le charme de ses grandes manières.

Car tout cela est-il bien vrai, qui n'a d'histoire ni de sens, qui n'a de trêve ni mesure? . . . Oui tout cela qui n'est pas clair, et ne m'est rien, et pèse moins qu'à mes mains nues de femme une clé d'Europe teinte de sang . . . Ah! tout cela est-il bien vrai? . . . (et qu'est-ce encore sur mon seuil,

que cet oiseau vert-bronze, d'allure peu catholique, qu'ils appellent Starling?)

"Rue Gît-le-coeur . . . Rue Gît-le-coeur . . ." chantent tout bas les cloches en exil, et ce sont là méprises de leur langue d'étrangers.

3

Dieux proches, dieux sanglants, faces peintes et closes! Sous l'orangerie des lampes à midi mûrit l'abîme le plus vaste. Et cependant que le flot monte à vos persiennes closes, l'Été déjà sur déclin, virant la chaîne de ses ancres,

vire aux grandes roses d'équinoxe comme aux verrières des Absides.

Et c'est déjà le troisième an que le fruit du mûrier fait aux chaussées de votre rue de si belles tâches de vin mûr, comme on en vit au coeur des althaeas, comme on en vit aux seins des filles d'Eloa. Et c'est déjà le troisième an qu'à votre porte close,

comme un nid de Sibylles, l'abîme enfante ses merveilles: lucioles!

Dans l'Été vert comme une impasse, dans l'Été vert de si beau vert, quelle aube tierce, ivre créance, ouvre son aile de locuste? Bientôt les hautes brises de Septembre tiendront conseil aux ports de la Ville, sur les savanes d'aviation, et dans un grand avènement d'eaux libres

la Ville encore au fleuve versera toute sa récolte de cigales mortes d'un Été.

. . . Et toujours il y a ce grand éclat du verre, et tout ce haut suspens. Et toujours il y a ce bruit de grandes eaux. Et parfois c'est Dimanche, et par les tuyauteries des chambres, montant des fosses atlantides, avec ce goût de l'incrédible comme une haleine d'outremonde,

C'est un parfum d'abîme et de néant parmi les moisissures de la terre . . .

Poème a l'Etrangère! Poème a l'Emigrée! . . . Chaussée de crêpe ou d'amarante entre ses hautes malles incloses! . . . O grande par le coeur et par le cri de votre race! L'Europe saigne à vos flancs comme la Vierge du Toril! . . . Vos souliers de bois d'or furent aux vitrines de l'Europe

et les sept glaives de vermeil de Votre Dame des Angoisses.

Les cavaleries encore sont aux églises de vos pères, humant l'astre de bronze aux grilles des autels. Et les hautes lances de Bréda montent la garde au pas des portes de famille. Mais plus d'un coeur bien né s'en fut à la canaille. Et il y avait aussi bien à redire à cette enseigne du bonheur, sur vos golfes trop bleus,

comme le palmier d'or au fond des boîtes à cigares.

Dieux proches, dieux fréquents! quelle rose de fer nous forgerez-vous demain? L'Oiseau-moqueur est sur nos pas! Et cette histoire n'est pas nouvelle que le Vieux Monde essaime à tous les siècles, comme un rouge pollen . . . Sur le tambour voilé des lampes à midi, nous mènerons encore plus d'un deuil, chantant l'hier, chantant l'ailleurs, chantant le mal à sa naissance

et la splendeur de vivre qui s'exile à perte d'hommes cette année.

Mais ce soir de grand âge et de grande patience, dans l'Été lourd d'opiates et d'obscurcs laitances, pour délivrer à fond d'abîme le peuple de vos lampes, ayant, homme très-seul, pris par ce haut quartier de Fondations d'aveugles, de Réservoirs mis au linceul et de vallons en cage pour les morts, longeant les grilles et les lawns et tous ces beaux jardins à l'italienne

dont les maîtres un soir s'en furent épouvantés d'un parfum de sépulcre,

Je m'en vais, ô mémoire! à mon pas d'homme libre, sans horde ni tribu, parmi le chant des sabliers, et le front nu, lauré d'abeilles de phosphore, au bas du ciel très vaste d'acier vert comme en un fond de mer, sifflant mon peuple de Sibylles, sifflant mon peuple d'incrédules, je flatte encore en songe, de la main, parmi tant d'êtres invisibles, ma chienne d'Europe qui fut blanche et, plus que moi, poète.

"Rue Gît-le-cœur . . . Rue Gît-le-cœur . . . " chante tout bas l'Ange à Tobie, et ce sont là méprises de sa langue d'Etranger.

Washington, 1942.

Saint-John Perse

POEM TO A FOREIGN LADY

"Alien Registration Act"

(1)

Sands nor old grasses will not charm the footsteps of the ages to come, there where the street was paved for you in stone without memory—O stone inexorable and green, more so than
the green blood of the Castils beating in your temples, foreign Lady!

An eternity of fair weather weighs upon the closed membranes of silence and, in the depths of the abyss, the wooden house tugging at its anchors, ripens in a fruit of lamps at noon
for the warmer hatching of new ailments.

But the trams worn out with use which went off one evening where the street turns, which went off on rails to the Atlantis countries over the

highways and the ramps
and the Observatory terraces overrun with sargasso;

through the suburbs of fresh waters and of Zoos haunted by circus-folk, through the negro quarters and those of the Asiatics with their migrations of minnows and by the beautiful green solstices of plazas, circular like atolls,

(where one night the Federal cavalry pitched camp, O thousand-heads of sea-horses!)

Singing the yesterdays, singing the otherwhere, sang evil at its birth and in the two notes of the Cat-bird, the wooded Summer of young Capitals infested with cicadas—Well, here at your door, left on account for the Foreign Lady

these two rails, these two rails—whence come?—they have not said their last.

“Rue Gît-le-cœur. . . . Rue Gît-le-cœur . . . ” the Alien One sings low under her lamps and those are the mistakes of her Foreign Lady’s language.

(2)

“. . . No, not tears—had you believed it?—
but that affliction of the eyes we get in the end from the excessive fixity of the sword-blade on all the embers of this world,

(O Sabre of Strogoff as high as our eyelashes!)

perhaps also, in the flesh, the thorn of a younger bramble at the heart of the women of my race; and, I quite agree, the abuse until dawn of those long widows’ cigars, among the people of my lamps,

in all this noise of great waters the night of the New World makes.

. . . You that sing—it is your song—you that sing all the banishments of the world, will you not sing me an evening song to the measure of my pain? a song of grace for my lamps,

A song of grace for the vigil and for the dawn darker at the heart of the althaeas?

Of violence on earth there is given to us in such large measure. . . .
O you, men of France, will you not see to it that I hear, under the human season, among the cries of the martins and everywhere Ursuline bells, rising through the gold chaff and the powder of your Kings

A laughter of washerwomen in the little pebbled streets?

. . . Do not say there is a bird singing on my roof and that he is dressed in fine red like a Prince of the Church. Do not say—you have seen him—that the squirrel is on the veranda, with the paper-boy, the Begging Nuns and the milkman. Do not say that far in the sky

a pair of eagles, since yesterday, keep the City under the charm of their noble manners.

For, is there any truth in all that—which has no meaning or history, measure or truce? Yes, all that which is not clear and is nothing to me, weighing less with me than in my woman's bare hands a key from Europe stained with blood. . . . Ah! is there any truth in all that? . . . (and more, what is this on my threshold,

this green-bronze bird, rather heretical looking, which they call a Starling?)”

“Rue Gît-le-cœur . . . Rue Gît-le-cœur . . .”sing low the bells in exile and those are the mistakes of their foreigners’ language.

(3)

Gods close by, gods bleeding, faces painted and shut! Beneath the orangery of the noontide lamps the vastest abyss matures. And while the flood rises to your closed slatted blinds, Summer already in decline, hauls in its anchor chains,

veers towards the great roses of the Equinox as towards the stained glass of the Apes.

And it is already the third year that the fruit of the mulberry on the pavements of your street makes such beautiful ripe wine stains, such as were seen at the heart of the althaeas, such as were seen on the breasts of the daughters of Eloa. And it is already the third year that at your shut door,

like a nest of Sibyls, the abyss gives birth to its wonders: fireflies!

In Summer green like a blind alley, in Summer green with such beautiful green, what tierce dawn, in belief inebriate, opens its locust wings? Soon the high September breezes will hold counsel at the City gates, on the Savannas of airports, and in a great advent of free waters,

the City will pour again into the river its whole harvest of a Summers’ dead cicadas.

And always there is this great glitter of glass and all lofty suspense.

And always there is this noise of great waters. And sometimes it is Sunday and through the pipery of the rooms, rising from the Atlantidean pits, with that taste of the uncreated like a breath of the other world, it is a smell of the abyss and the nothing out of earth's mustiness. . . .

Poem to the Foreign Lady! Poem to the Emigrant Lady! . . .
Shoed in crêpe or amaranth among her tall trunks not yet unfolded! . . .
O great in heart and in the cry of your race! Europe bleeds at your flanks like the Virgin of the Toril! . . . Your gilded wooden shoes in the window-fronts of Europe

And the seven blades of vermeil for Your Lady of Anguish.

The cavalries still ride in the churches of your fathers, sniffing at the bronze stars on the altar grills. And the tall lances of Breda mount guard at the family gates. But many a well-born heart has gone off to the canaille. And there was also more to be said about that signboard of happiness, on your gulfs too blue,
like the gold palm-tree inside the cigar-box.

Gods close-by, frequent gods! what rose of iron will you forge for us tomorrow? The Mocking Bird is at our back! And it is not new, this story that the Old World swarms over all the centuries, like red pollen . . . To the muffled drums of the noontide lamps we shall again conduct many a funeral procession, singing the yesterdays, singing the otherwhere, singing evil at its birth

And the splendour of living going this year into exile farther off than men.

But this evening of great age and great patience, in the Summer heavy with opiates and the dimness of milk, I, most solitary man, in order to deliver in the depths of the abyss the people of your lamps, having taken my way up into this high suburb of Hospices for the Blind, enshrouded Reservoirs and encaged valleys for the dead, walking by railings and lawns and fine Italian gardens

whose masters fled one night, terrified by a smell of the grave.

I proceed, O memory! in my free man's stride, without horde or tribe, in the song of the hourglasses, and the forehead bare, laureled with phosphorescent bees, at the foot of the vast sky of green steel, like at the floor of a sea, whistling on my people of Sibyls, whistling on my people incredulous, in dreams again I am petting with my hand among so many invisible beings,

my bitch of Europe who was white and, more than me, a poet.

"Rue Gît-le-coeur . . . Rue Gît-le-coeur . . ." sings low the Angel to Tobias and those are the mistakes of his Foreigner's language.

Washington, 1942.

—Translated by DENIS DEVLIN

Jean Malaquais

WORD AND TESTIMONY

Where to begin, by what end to grasp words? Words are so numerous, I only know a small heap of them, they are so difficult to handle. I must fight with them, subdue them syllable by syllable, but even so this submission is feigned when they consent to line themselves up in the order of their greatness, their weight, in such a way as to give the feeling of an image, the illusion of a feeling. I must take them one by one and body to body, make their shoulder-blades touch the ground and so knead them that they swallow their burrs, but this is still a poor victory for like vicious tumblers with lead in their heads they always stand again and trip me up. The cabinetmaker's hand knows the plane, it is a tool moulded to his hand, a blow—a shaving, what honesty, and the fitter's chisel and the carpenter's mortising axe and the mason's trowel, see what uprightness there is in their understanding, what suppleness in their agreement,—but words? True, wood blossoms beneath the tracing of iron, iron beneath the biting of steel, steel cheers between the mass and the anvil,—but words? I asked the baker for his oven-shovel, how obedient and flexible it is with its gilded bulb of bread in the right heat, and I asked to touch the woodcutter's axe and the tailor's needle and the cooper's auger and the weaver's shuttle, God how fine it is under the thick of the thumb, how faithful in the palm of the hand—but words? One cannot carefully model them, give them a recognizable form—here the word begins, there the word ends. One cannot. You make a table and they will say—that's a good, or a bad table, it has such and such, but you make words and they will not say—have you seen the words he has made, they have such and such, they will say—he has made words, let's see what he is hiding behind them. It's because words have no head, no tail, they come to us all the way from our Neanderthal great uncle, they will follow us as far as our grand nephew of the trillionth year, always the same and yet always others, pure mass-less and volume-less symbols,

which could not be stacked in a corner of the room and contemplated at leisure, which could not be taken beneath a magnifying glass and sniffed at to one's heart's content.—“A word,” says the doctor, “a word,” he says without laughing and also without crying, “a word is a monosyllabic or polysyllabic sound with a meaning.” Of course the doctor is a charlatan because the meaning is a common measure, and naturally words are not measurable, we mean that they have no common measure for everybody. For, after all, what kind of meaning? Is it a this end or that end, a within or without, a right side or wrong side meaning? If they asked me for my opinion, and even if they didn't ask me, I would say that words are the monstrous debris of a monstrous puzzle: taken separately, they have hardly one meaning; coupled together, they have a multiplicity of meanings; one by one, they have hardly one dimension; in Indian file they acquire three (four—from what the relativists say), and a relief which subjects them to the laws of perspective. You say knife, you say belly, that certainly isn't complicated, we can agree on that, a knife is to cut the loaf, a belly to sleep on, but a knife *in* a belly,—eh? How that at once changes its meaning, its perspective, and how different it is then according to whether it's your belly that it goes into or your neighbor's, and whether or not it's a knife with a safety-notch, whether it's six inches long or ten, and if it has been driven into you from top to bottom or from side to side, and if it's the belly of the guy that plays his radio after ten o'clock at night, what luck, but if it's that of the character who took you for a ride in his Renault—in the days when there were Renaults—what bad luck!

We could talk about that for days; talk about it with a great supply of words which do not mean the same things to any of the talkers. However, that a single preposition embedded between two really rather silly words modifies so diversely their meaning, their perspective, and their specific weight—this is what condemns the doctor's bible; but if, pushing the spirit of vengeance to the limits of perversity, you were to link to the preceding exercise another word, another preposition, an adverb, a possessive adjective, which would for example give—a knife upright in my cousin's belly . . . and what stamping for joy at the gates of hell!—Aha! they would cry.—Ahaha! Have you seen how it goes? But naturally everyone would look at it in his own way of seeing, according to whether the eye be rheumy or with a sty on the lid, almond shaped or looking sideways, whether one is squint or one-eyed, hypermetrope or nyctalopic, for there is no assembly of words forming a sentence that is not like these marvelous machines of our childhood, which, fitted with little different coloured fragments, showed new combinations at each movement. I looked into the tube, it was awfully exciting, I said—here's the railroad and right here is a fellow hurrying who's not going to get

there; but the pal who pushed me away with his elbow and in turn glued his eye to the machine said indignantly—where's any railroad, I see a business like mama's hat here with feathers. That was called a kaleidoscope, and we both spoke in good faith, my little pal and your servant, but alas the faith called good has rarely sufficed to make two souls agree upon a thing as evidently innocent as for example the fact that the destiny of a boot is to shoe a foot. The whole thing would be in understanding what a boot is, and a foot, and then the destiny, I beg you to think of Cendrillon, for it's like the story of the tailor who asked for fifteen days to make a pair of pants.—Fifteen days? they said to him.—When God spent six making the world?—Yes, said the tailor.—But what a world . . . and what pants! And, stuffed with thousands of words which are so many fragments painted in loud colours of an experience wholly personal and vigorously partial, a book upon the violent theme of war is a damned kaleidoscope whose crank does not rest exactly in the well-wishing hands of the archangels. You can see what you want to with that, as well as what you don't want to, according to whether you are a Nazi-eater or Jew-eater, whether you applaud *Déroulède* or vituperate *Déroulède*, say France snoring or France sneezing. Also I have but few illusions: These words, which I try to line up here with the naive hope that they will serve as a prop to words lined up elsewhere, probably won't convince anyone. Besides, words are not made to convince. Words are words, that is to say wind. But like wind, words—provided they have some blast—words sometimes succeed in displacing mountains. Even so there have to be mountains in their path. Generally words displace only dust. The dust of words. So that it's a vicious circle and a running knot and mud up to the nostrils and a rain of diversely sonorous epithets, but it's justice, for the man who tries to make words his working tools must expect to be stoned to death.

As today, as until today, the world is sparing of joys, prodigal of suffering. And, by a sort of topsy-turvy democracy, you can have someone share the little of your joy, a glass of cognac, a country party is enough, but you cannot make anyone share the excess of your suffering, it is not enough to howl to the stars, to shudder beneath the walls of razed Troy. Perhaps this is because joy solicits you, calls you, as for example the harmony of forms captures your glance, so that you participate in it without having been expressly invited, for the simple reason that joy is good and does good, being of the lightness of air and of light, having a weight inversely proportionate to its volume, while suffering acts upon you like the bad side of the magnet, being literally and figuratively repulsive, having so dreadful a weight that the slightest particle which someone tries to load upon you in excess of your own burden threatens to break your spinal column. Perhaps it is also because joy is

generous, I mean hard to conceal, it springs out of your eyes and everything about you is dazzled by it, it makes oysters yawn and so we have pearls, while suffering gives nothing, it puts its man against the wall, strips him and backs him against the wall and beats him black and blue, and the more thickly rain the chestnuts, and so much the more profoundly alone is the man. Watch the kid, the colt, the dizzy adolescent, the girl in love, they gambol and caper and fidget, they snap up the sky in their lips and shake it like a square of painted silk, but watch them suffer, they shrink themselves up into a ball, they lie in a heap,—and it's a solitude from which nothing could draw them out, to which no one has access. I'm not making this up, man is alone, *Man stands alone*, said Julian Huxley, he who is not, however, a bard.—And man is twice alone in suffering.

We are as we can be, as we succeed in being, little or very much sensitive, little or very much permeable to the collective agony of the world. I do not think that there are valid sufferings, nor invalid ones either, we haven't come to telling the tuberculous man he is wrong to cough, the club foot he is wrong to limp, but I think that there is something worse than being tortured in the concentration camps, worse than being in agony with an opened belly in the islands called pacific, and this is to see someone being tortured, to see someone in agony.—It is being a witness. I am not more of a pacifist nor more cowardly than anyone else, I am a man and thus passionate, but war, that bitch. That bitch. Look before you, behind you, look at yourself in the mirror, and if you have the courage, say that you are content with the sight. In those days when they had us fighting the phony war, the stagnant war, we spent our life looking at ourselves in the mirror, I mean looking at one another—until we had cramps in our eyeballs. The war, while we were in it with our thirty-four-year old bones, with our hands full of the great joy of living, the war had made us witnesses. Witnesses who were not happy. Nor proud either. There was no such thing. No, by God, no such thing. I saw the fellows going to pieces, crackling beneath the inhuman burning of displacement and solitude, and I went along repeating to myself—show me, show me a single conscript who is happy to have been conscripted, who prefers it to a girl giving herself up, to the perfume of the soup beneath the evening lamp, and I'll let you tear out my tongue.

I made war as I could, as they had me make it, that is to say poorly, that is to say queerly. Then I tried to say how I saw this queer war, not how it really was, things are never really nor identically equal for everybody, but as I had seen it, as I had felt it pass over my own skin. No doubt it was not my duty, I mean my duty to speak of it, some will even contest my right to this, a lot of good may it do them, but the fact is that I kept a notebook, like not a few other companions, Frenchmen and

Englishmen, Americans and Canadians, Zulus and Papuans. So like not a few others, I cultivated little four-sou copy-books, a collection of little copy-books made in Germany or made in Japan, noting in them this and that, just as they came from a pen made in U.S.A., because I was lonely, or discontent, or suddenly joyous, and because you must be all of that at one time to keep a journal. I surrendered myself to it in all simplicity, in all partiality, not writing for the use of the historian nor certainly for the use of the Sunday critic, writing with no more mental reservation than a dope-fiend would have taking his drug, but I knew hell yes that I hated war, that the massacre of young lives and old stones knotted my soul in a triple splice, so that each line embedded in my notebooks will itself also be knotted, knotted and molded from blood spilled and to be spilled—and that exactly as if I had been alone and the only one bleeding on the vast earth. But perhaps this was not truly war, that is what is understood by the word, the shell which makes you chew your own bile, the flame-thrower whose light smile makes charcoal out of a section of ten fellows filled with good sap, the torpedo whose call would return to reason the most demented lunatic; perhaps it was the immense filthiness that war exhales, the immense minute vermin which ooze out of it and proliferate right in man's heart. I rattled feeling my heart swelling with elephantiasis, seeing cut to the marrow fine males who would have been able to live fine simple and upright lives, but who were going off—going off rotten and rotting along the glorious pathways of heroic dysentery.

Among the commemorative chromos of the present war, the French army will be entitled to an imagery of choice: that of victims. All during the longest gestation period conceivable, the men of 1939 chewed with empty mouths their monumental blues, and there was no relief for them. They had been promised that they were going to drink the Styx, and for nine months they crouched upon the manure of the villages of Lorraine. Knowing nothing of war—and thus of defeat—but its sanious humors, but the slow madness of cantonments and stalags and Vichy concentration camps, they have not only missed their destiny as soldiers: they will have been accused of having lost France. Having finally admitted—admitted in advance and permanently that the exploits of their fathers were, are, and will be unrivalled in the annals of the game of musket and lost ball, they have seen themselves denied the bugle of the blusterer. There was no after-churching dinner given on their return from hell. There wasn't even any return. And yet. Surely they did not like the idea of re-beginning Verdun, the miracle of the Marne held few temptations for them, and yet they would have done Verdun again and as many miracles as might have been needed. Oh, they were not heroes,

no one is a hero jumping from his bed, but they would nevertheless have drunk the Styx if they had been driven to it, if someone had put into their hands the means of giving those who deserved it a lead colic. Their teeth were solid enough to clip the pin of grenades, their arms strong enough to stuff the barrel of cannons, but they were neither given grenades nor cannons, the fine well polished equipment having been put in line, back to the enemy, sighted upon the heart of France. I do not say that they would have done their "duty," it's a big joke this "duty" consisting in returning knocked in the face when you have been handsome, a legless cripple when you have been a football player, and yet I know how they would have acted in the furnace, reducing fire with fire, blood with blood. Crippled but courageous. Exactly like no matter what soldier in no matter what army, each trumpet its hard, proven fighter, for even the sheep come head first into a circle of fire. They would have done as they were obliged to do, swallowing their fear and winning their ribbons. They would have been just as valiant as any man at blows with violent death, for that's the way we are gallant knights, swallowing fear but spewing recklessness, goblet of slaver for goblet of slaver. I see that, I see how we become greater than life-size. I see how life and death become a collective affair, and how one ceases to be a witness. A trench. Fifteen men, each having killed fifteen hundred, seen fifteen hundred agonies, are asleep standing against the muddy wall. They are no longer even dead tired, they have passed the extreme limit of physical stiffness. The shells pant in the tragic body of the night, perhaps one of them will find its way to our trench, but perhaps not before the wine that has been expected during twenty-four hours of cosmic thirst arrives. It is so dark that the shells get a little lost, so dark that the wine certainly is lost, once there was a dark lane where someone had madly made love. Hunched beneath the sudden light of a rocket, an officer appears in the approach-trench; he has been young, he has been haughty, he is now nothing but a bundle of rags. His eyes try to see the fifteen men whose names, faces, and simple, singular story he has learned to know, and he says—boys, I need ten volunteers, a dirty job, boys, I don't want any married men. He says this in a neutral voice, as if he were announcing K.P. duty to them, but his eyes burn like two big disks in the night and one feels strongly that he would like to sit down there and weep. At first nobody moves, says a word, ten men must go, ten must jump over the bank of sand bags and crawl toward the great fear of death—and how many will come back? They don't think—I will come back, I won't come back, they think—how many of us? They think collectively. But still no one has moved, there has been a silence of sleep, of nightmare, you would say that even the firing itself has stopped,—ten men, boys, a dirty job. The officer watches with his eyes burning wildly, fifteen guys such as you wouldn't find again in the whole world, oh yes, let them take another

second to wake up to their task of delayed death, because among millions of seconds a single one would be enough to hold the announcement of the end of the nightmare,—and if it were just this second. And it *is* just the second. That at which the fear becomes so atrocious, and the shame of fear so atrocious, and the lengthening of the hesitation so atrocious, that a man steps out and says—*me*, and behind him nine men say—*me*.

Perhaps the men of September, 1939, didn't know that. Didn't have that. Weren't afraid enough to be no longer afraid. Weren't ashamed enough to exalt their pride as men. In their common life nothing had meaning but the common rotting. If since this time I had borne witness to the quiet penumbras of a work-room, dipped my pen in the insipid ink of flag-waving phraseology, rounded off my finales in the "objective" sauces of detachment, perhaps my prose might have been fit to satisfy the demands of so-called balanced souls. But aside from the fact that "objective detachment" is foreign to me, and the idea of humoring the right-thinkers odious, I would have contributed to the most monumental swindling by guesswork that a people and an army have ever had to suffer from.

The men of September, 1939, were not "heroic," since they could not give their full measure. Given up to the stigma of idleness, of the degrading task, they knew the demoralizing effects of war without knowing its exaltation. War rots man, decomposes him into his most primitive elements, which sometimes only fire succeeds in purifying. All that they knew of the war was the wrong side, the great tiny noxious vermin. I was there, up to my ears in manure. And I have testified as I saw, as I was made to see. But I have not testified against France. Not testified against my companions. I have testified against what has been done with them. Others, who believe in the glory of kicking off from a shell burst in the belly, will testify differently. That will balance things.

Mexico, April, 1944.

Pierre Emmanuel

LOT'S DAUGHTERS

Jars turned in the substance of the sea
annointed with dream within by the somber hand
which formed them for its pleasure and sealed them
on what wise oblivion full of future langours
what suffocating Eden of tears and odours,

Virgins whom the tropics encircle, o so bare
so warm! about whom an engulfing anguish
hollows out the world like a hand at its belly,
They walk upon the young sky at the rim of ages
more chaste than the awakening dawn: more decked
with leaves, with dews, with happy winds, with springs
than lustral, coming from the bath, before love
the queen thrown over on the purple, weeping

From Lebanon crowned with softness and with deep blue
cedars melted into the suave sky between its breasts
silence descends in silver bounds, the living water
upon the flank it brightens vanishes and dies
The hand follows the contour of the dream to the pure hips
an almond tree shakes its laughter upon the secret
hill where foams a wave of flowers: the blond breeze
wrinkles the silk of a belly with reflections of red grain
burning twilight of a sex oblique and wild
as far as the breasts more calm and bare than Ideas.
And all the sky pressed upon their shoulder, sponge
of ardour! their body sober and perfect jets forth from time
streaming with desire and with Night: we hear
the sensuous concert of fleeces and of torsos
violins whose strange phrase investigates
the destiny of the city tapered upon its crime
panic orchestra where the forbidden cries discordant.

Majesty of scandal in this cloaca of men
Woman! Here you are naked as in the beginning
and smooth beneath the divine hand . . . What silence
in this closed garden upon only your coolness
blessed enclosure to which the waters retreat
which a nostalgic Eden fills with its murmuring
a powerful movement of clouds and of palms
orders itself when you walk and regulates the horizon:
Your hips softly balancing the seasons
cradling the dream of the earth . . . You advance
bearing tender sex and melting like a fruit,
mad remonstrance exorcizing Sodom in vain

The great sky spreading your knees with its wing
bends over your breasts shivering, and plunges
its sacred plumage into the furrow of dream:

it snorts, and the deep flesh to his desire
is a sweet water to the ardent swan which flees,
while extended in the ages you feel
it suddenly let go, the wing dead and rumpled
the Swan (or Angel) clasped again between your legs
in the brusque and vigorous embrace which the sharp one
with a cry—golden and burning unto tears—releases.

François Mauriac

L'HONNEUR DES ECRIVAINS*

A country has the writers it deserves: they are witnesses who do not deceive it and who give it, at each moment, the exact temperature of its genius. What a strange whimsy it is for us, on the morrow of our defeat, to accuse the poets, the philosophers, the artists, all those whose very existence should help us not to lose heart!

Perhaps on the day when we are tired of beating our sin against the breast of France we will repent of having persuaded the rest of the world that we are a people of *combinard* politicians and *apéritif* drinkers. Then we will remember this magnificent chain which from Barrès, from Péguy, from Bergson, from Maurras, from Claudel, from Proust, from Jammes and from Gide, goes to Montherlant, Malraux, Giono, passing through the generation of those who today are fifty years old.

Good masters? Bad masters? Bad or good as you may think them (for this is the way in all spiritual families), they testify to the fact that the French river still flows. Giraudoux is a son of Voltaire, as Valéry beyond Mallarmé rejoins Fontaine and Racine, as others have issued from Pascal or Montaigne. You say that their paintings slander the French family? Harpagon also slanders it and so does le père Grandet; and the "Provinciales" scoff eternally at some very saintly men. But today nothing prevails against the benefit which the beaten French nation owes to its writers, to take consciousness of what it is, of what it will continue to be.

Besides, how can we make them responsible for our misfortunes in our France where the writers worthy of the name reach only an élite insignificant in number, and isolated from the masses? A specialist could tell us which were the greatest book-store successes of the between-two-wars period; I imagine that *La Garçonne*, *La Madone des Sleepings*,

*From *Ne Pas Se Rénier*. (20 January 1941.)

or works of this sort win the race which for that matter does not furnish the slightest valid indication by which one could judge the public taste in France: these successes simply prove that among the 39 million Frenchmen who never cross the threshold of a book shop, a few hundred thousand have, by chance on a journey, under the influence of a well regulated publicity, or to nourish a few reveries or to give rise to a few images, once committed this strange astonishing act: bought a book.

But attention! If literary men have no power over the masses, they are attached to the people by deep roots; it suffices to be oneself of peasant and bourgeois stock and to live in the midst of the peasantry and the bourgeoisie to realize this and to catch at their springs all the sap which flows through the prose of our novelists and the verses of our poets. It remains that the flowers and fruits of these great trees nourished upon the peasant and bourgeois tufa are only smelled and savoured by a few, and never determine the currents of opinions which decide a peoples' politics.

All the more so because among us the separation was always particularly marked between literature and acting, electoral politics. For the French writers, to meddle with politics meant fighting for the abstract principles which our interchangeable masters always made fun of as of their first portfolios. Has the influence of a writer ever reached the ministerial cabinets? In the Chamber, Barrès' talent raised a great wall of China about him. In the Chamber, the glassware always eclipsed this diamond.

However, a closer examination would have to be made of the case of Charles Maurras and Jacques Bainville whose influence must have been profound upon those very men whom they fought with a passionate logic; and there would also have to be taken into account the literary infiltrations to the Quai d'Orsay, under the reign of Philippe Berthelot. But, with the exception of these two cases, there was hardly any communication in France between art, thought and public affairs. Although our Honorables were far from being illiterates, and although many of them had gone through the Normal School, they only succeeded in their careers in the degree to which they had renounced disinterested speculation: for an intellectual in our country, entry into politics has always meant the renunciation of letters, and the cultivated ministers who, between two portfolios, have tried to return to them have given us nothing but books contaminated by the verbiage and the lies of politics.

Veracity, sincerity toward himself, everything that is most contrary to politics—that is today our touchstone for recognizing a true writer. As different as our good authors may be in inspiration and method, they all offer this common trait that each one will leave of himself, of his faith, his love, but also of his weakness and his essential misery, an image

sometimes repulsive but always faithful. As for those whose work treats of politics or of religion like Maurras and Claudel, this is because their profound passion is essentially religious and political, and that they would have betrayed themselves in not obeying it.

On the morrow of a harsh defeat, let us not believe the simpletons, the envious or the cheats who try to demand from French writers a ready-made morality. Let us not become the accomplices of the powerless ones who, in the great silence after the cyclone, persuade themselves that their turn has come at last: A war which renews the face of Europe could neither take anything from nor add anything to "La jeune Parque," to the great Claudelian *Odes*, to *Anthinea*, to *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*, or to Gide's *Journal*. After as before our disaster the great books remain great books; and despite their sublime principles, the writers of nothingness will never cease to belong to nothingness.

(NOTE: This article is one of a series which appeared from June, 1940, to November, 1942, in *Le Figaro Littéraire*, and has since been collected and republished by *La Revue Fontaine* in its fourth "Relai," where, as one of a series, it takes on "tout [son] sens de protestation et [sa] valeur d'écrit clandestin hors de la clandestinité proprement dite." We regret that limited space does not allow us to follow a similar procedure.)

Pierre-Jean Jouve

ODE FUNEBRE

(sur trois hommes morts torturés
qu'ils n'ont pas permis de revoir)

The landscape here is immense beyond belief
Depthless like immense strength and the more immense sky
Going from our eyes to the sea
Its folds have only softness and immensity
The mountains are an immense blue
The roads are crowded with the longest thoughts
And immense majestic trees carved on the land
Make shadows with an affected summer labor
The rivers have neither end nor play
Except the grandeur of architecture near the cities
Birds pass immensely on blue waves
And this immensity looks forth oriented
For its eyes and its hands go toward the east
For its mountains move ancient and nameless
For its thoughts have long illustrated themselves

For it has distantly spilt good blood
For its immensity makes a profound voyage
And a savage inclination which no one has seen
Has grown its beautiful cities dusty with gold
In severe success and which they never saw
So golden was the success they did not see it at all
So much did these immense things master
The traveler and no one knew what was
The splendor of immensity in sharp tenors.

What is happening is a miracle. O long earth!
She has understood the other secret of her splendor
She has spoken without end over villages
She has thought without number in forests
May it be so at last. And may the gulf at last
Be my own gulf descending towards the earth
For the greatness of my immense landscape
May it be immense and most obscurely
Splendid once having been the simplicity of light
May it be tears and infinite tears and tears immense
Beneath the beauty of banks and trees
At the pitying and lonely gate of cities
In the light still with eternity.

Pierre Seghers

THE SYSTEM OF THE SKY

to Pierre Emmanuel

I

A day always the same
Opens its eyes washes its hands
Looks at its image in your face

It has known moon and sun
The austral ocean and its stars
It is as simple as yesterday

Always the same always bare
It tells you the sound of worlds
And you hear nothing but your heart

II

The movement does not change
He who carries the clouds
He who creates the ocean's beating

Sprouting growing flowering dying
The dancing master of the seasons
The great apparitor remains

As perfect as on the first day
He reigns in the pathways of your blood
By your eyes he is measured

III

And had you but a single voice
What would you say? It's he who sings
He has lent you his words, your words

He has been made image and language
To be you, he has come
With sea-weed and with beasts

With trees and with the night
With the sky, with the earth
Then with your voice said all

IV

They wanted to make
A rule out of a god
As if God were not

In the breast that you touch
As if God were not
In the shoulder and the mouth

As if God were not
In the Love that made him

V

The same day goes off on the same chariots
Ulysses is dead, Ulysses is dead, but Jeanne or Pierre
Take life from the same blood and the same prayers

Time does not exist Time and the sun
Are indefinitely linked to our life
The system of the sky dwells in our heart

Our head is like the moving stars
And we are so great from center to edge
The universe is in us its living and its dead.

Paul Claudel ON THE SITE

But what an extraordinary idea suddenly this would be if we had
just caught sight of one another!

Between myself and my neighbor (this triple down-stroke of m
like a blade in its sheath!) between myself and the other man,

There is a double wall, we are teaching him to climb over his own
and first our own.

It is not an easy job and there is nothing amazing about it

If after a few clumsy rough-sketched attempts we draw back dis-
couraged.

It's quite enough, with this shabby scenario they give us to make
what we can of, to stammer and stumble through.

Without giving the blow by scandalously leaving and forcing us to
improvise brilliantly!

To stand up all of a sudden and to make ourselves appear as we
are.

Beneath the mournful dusty Pierrot, this angel and this monster
which is man,

We need something absolutely stronger and desperate,

Sex for example which begins to bellow and this being so much the
worse for himself at any price without whom we absolutely cannot get
along!

A lion for a moment has taken the breadth and more often a lioness,

This woman who has her lover to save,—or this mother, if you wish,
her child—ah there, there! and who has no more fear of anyone.

But soon everything goes dead and goes out and we reintegrate our customs,

Madame goes back to her housework and monsieur takes interest in his studies.

No trespassing! says the sign at each end of our plot.

And please before entering ring at Peter Rabbit's door.

But something happened, our house took fire.

Something like the thunder of God fell upon our Peter-Rabbit house.

This is not exactly what I meant. And if you are willing to go back to what I was talking about a little while ago,

There is just the same someone in the center of Europe who did not hesitate to take on himself the role of a sparkling improviser.

Who would ever have suspected it? Of all of us, he was certainly the heaviest and most stupid.

And there he is suddenly taking the offensive and beginning to yell at the top of his voice.

The first time we came after all to the end of it, and, by choosing five of us, we finally sat on it,

Not without a great deal of time and uproar and considerable damage to other things besides our overcoat.

And we hardly had time to breathe and to get settled and, as they say, to light a cigarette,

And to take up the game again and to examine each other properly as should partners each of whom knows of the other that he is not particularly honest,

When there it was beginning again between the Rhine and the Vistula! And the parishioner who had all this time been ever so slightly forgotten and neglected,

We would indeed like to believe the opposite, but little by little, beyond a doubt he had gone back to his first ideas!

That began with tears and little grieving sighs,

Like the bitch that gets on her back while giving us an affectionate look,

But when, thanks to the comrades filing by, there he is face to face alone with his principal creditor,

Kant has nothing more imperative than his intention not to pay at any price.

So he doesn't pay. Nothing happens . . . and since this knot doesn't hold, the good apostle

Will not be long, believe me! in getting rid of the others.

It's done! twenty years have passed. And the hour of prowess has returned!

In place of a poor whining invalid, a giant has stood up.

The time has come to give satisfaction once more to this devil I have swallowed!

We're going to see something, this time! Left and right, everywhere I have scores to settle!

Hurrah! I have a stick in my hand and like a deaf man I tap on all sides.

O! all these men who wish to shut me up, cries the mad-man, it's frightful! I have absolute need of room.

It is only with everything that is not me beneath my feet that I will be convinced of my right and my power and my reason and my person and my race.

The madman is on the ground once more, and by God, we didn't put him there without trouble!

Now what are we going to do with this hollow in our midst, with this hole and this plain?

It is a poor kingdom, this wise king once said, which is contented with having a single tribe.

But for the one we are going to found now, unanimously, there will never be enough languages and attributes!

And since it is what I do not have that I miss, and just what I miss that I have need of,

That which I could do without is not what is most different and farthest from myself.

There will never be enough ways of differentiating about me! There will never be enough ways of doing good for myself.

There will never be enough propositions and desires between us.

There will never be too much and enough to give me ways to acquire what I do not have.

What I have numberless in myself, there will never be too many temptations to bring out!

People who are standing about this gulf in suspense, I invite you to look at these walls which the madman has thrown down,

Convinced that they will not be raised again from the gulf, and neither from this one or any other, or in any way.

To realize myself in my form I have no need of barriers.

I have no need of walls to be at home in my unquestionable personality.

(And in the first place, there are no more walls, the airplane having made them useless.)

I have confidence that there is need of that in which I am irreplaceable.

Messieurs l'Europe! I invite you to take notice of this enormous thing which has been cleared away!

This continent ready at our disposal and that of a single challenge and which has been cleaned before us from one end to the other.

This kind of building with its sublime ridge and all sorts of magnificent slopes,

And these great rivers in the opposite direction which give from part to part life to its dreadful mechanism.

Peoples! A paradise is put before your eyes which is not exactly one of fools!

The good God has not made this great thing at one swoop to let it remain in pieces eternally.

Look, people, with defiance, new issue of I know not how many interloping races!

Contemplate your heritage and this carpet beneath your feet which climbs and descends and opens itself in great folds!

Like a dazzled engineer who looks and who takes account of the location of Europe!

Paul Eluard

TO HER WHO REPEATS WHAT I SAY

Quickened by a single kiss

From derisive as she was
She became woman in all ways
And woman took the colours
Of a world changing and fine
Of a world warm and softly beating

Inconstant conjugate
Foolish faithless prisoner
Quickened by a single kiss
Everywhere recalling it
Underneath the deepest eyes
The smiling of a kiss

And love with the rain
With much fine weather
And love with the night
With the proudest present
And the farthest absent

No one shared her reason she
Lived upon the faith
Of an eternal youth.

Paul Eluard

SAINT-ALBAN

The water in the mountain meadows
Continues singing softly at our feet
It is cool evening falls and we rejoin
Our eyes upon the path we know by heart

Our young friends are awaiting us
Country living does us good
Our leaves will regain the tree
Our grass will find the night of its growth

This evening there will be laughs some tears
Will mingle with them love will baptise the night
With new names the colour of our bare bodies
Rose will put on her bonnet red

Blanche will lose her bonnet black.

Paul Eluard

A SINGLE BODY

The heat has unknotted
The naked forest
There is no more forest
No more voyages on water
No more light shadow on the loins
The day is a burden to us
Our body a prey
Clothed in ripened tears
The fingers are bleeding nails
The breasts turn upon themselves
The mouth has only sisters

There are no more windows to open
There is no more countryside
Nor pure air nor impure
Our eyes come back to their source
Beneath the naked flesh of their natal beauty.

Denis de Rougemont

ARS PROPHETICA

or, A Language that does not want to be clear

A critic. I have read your two dialogues on the Postal Card*, and I rather like them. . . . No, it is not exact to say that I like them. They irritate and disturb me. But I do not forget them.

The author. The memory of an offense is the longest. It seems sometimes that no praise is preferable to this: let them complain to me about my writings. I should like to see proof in that of a certain gravity that they present, as that word is used in speaking of a wound. . . .

The critic. Yes, yes. . . . But do not draw the argument from an exaggeration of my criticism. What bothered me, I think, was that from my point of view you were still not clear enough.

The author. And why be clear, please? You aren't going to tell me that that's the best way to be understood!

The critic. We would like to be sure that you have enough understanding of yourself.

The author. Enough for what?

The critic. Enough not to be duped by your sentences. Writing, and especially writing in French, is not violin-playing. All of a sudden you begin to play on two strings, and it is difficult to distinguish the passages; you change the key and we would like to know that you know it. . . . You seem not to have enough malice toward your ideas. They seduce you from afar, and when you give them to us they already have your complicity, an indefinable air of passion, a little too soon—which surprises us. . . .

The author. Isn't it always that way? I mean, isn't every writer first of all seduced, or on the contrary vexed by his images or his ideas—before he has any recognizable reason?

The critic. To be sure, but entrances should be composed. You should persuade us that your tastes are very good reasons, and that these reasons are our own. Either you make poetry and play with surprises, or you speak to us of ideas, and in this case, we must think at every moment, "I was going to say that!" But don't mix everything up, or someone will suspect trickery.

The author. Do you want to talk about clarity? I can hazard a guess that that will bring us back into the neighborhood of the subject of my two preceding dialogues.

The critic. Will you at least be on guard against obscurity?

* These two dialogues have remained in a drawer at Paris.

The author. It's just this foregone conclusion of clarity that I would now like to propose to your mistrustful reflection. With your permission I will offer myself the ridiculous service of defending my own point of view. It is possible that this clumsiness will teach me more than a friendly pretense. And then we are alone, and you will not take advantage of my avowals. . . . All the more so because they will probably be exaggerated.

The critic. What precautions! You are imitating this hero of some album of Toepffer's, who pretends to pretend, in order to pretend better. —What is being clear, in your opinion?

The author. As soon as someone asks this question it seems that he is condemned to answers either banal or mysterious. Isn't clarity merely a convention of language? I mean, a password of the tribe, or sort of style guaranteed by usage. . . .

The critic. Oh come, now, you know as well as I that our whole language is a conventional system!

The author. Our ordinary language without any doubt. And even more rigorously our intellectual and scientific language, which distinguishes itself from ordinary speech by a careful control of its conventions. But that is not the only possible mode of expression.

The critic. What I wanted precisely was to see you choose between a frankly poetic language and this clear and distinct speech which is suitable for the discussion of ideas.

The author. . . . which is suitable for the discussion of clear ideas! But first of all we would have to agree on the necessity of this clarity. For my part I would not be able either to conceive or respect any necessity in general but that which the *end* of any thought imposes on me.

The critic. Let us stay, if you please, on the plane of language. Isn't it the coherence of reasons and their adjustment to reality at the same time that constitutes the end of the expression?

The author. Yes, in a cartesian world, that is to say in the world of discourse. For the Discourse on Method defines nothing in sum but a method of discourse. The last end of a discourse is nothing other than coherence, truth itself finding itself regulated there by the logic of the succession of phrases. Another way of saying this is that the cartesian discourse has no end which is transcendent to itself. It starts with what it supposes clear and easy, and its progress is a deduction. The convention of such a language is that all is given *to the departure*, and that it is important not to introduce anything into the chain of arguments which has not first been gauged, ciphered, and defined in simple terms. It's up to me to watch out for so comfortable a convention.

The critic. It seems that we should see in it a guarantee against the illusions of flamboyant rhetoric. Romanticism could grow impatient with

such a scrupulous pace, but that is because it had a taste for self-deception and deceiving others.

The author. For my part, I fear a less naive trickery in cartesian modesty. For, really, where in the world can we find anything that is "clear, simple and easy" in itself? Isn't the world in which we live and speak the world, as a Russian has said, of "the imprecise and the unresolved"? Or as Descartes himself wrote, the world of "poorly measured" things? Has not the application of a reason, without foregone conclusion to this world as it is given, the immediate effect of multiplying the mystery and the logical absurdities? Look at Kafka. . . . I wonder then if cartesianism has not deceived us once and for all, at the very start by decreeing—in the name of what, please?—the clarity and simplicity of a certain number of abstract postulates. My distrustfulness finds its object in the mental reservation* which presided at the choice of these so-called first data. Yet it is not very exact to turn to the expression "mental reservation." Doubtless it is a "reserved image" that we should speak of.

The critic. Would it be too cartesian to ask you to be more precise about this?

The author. I'll try to do it by an example. The method invented by Descartes has, then, become that of science. It is used by our physicists, chemists, and mathematicians to formulate what they call laws. Good. But how do they obtain these formulas? By the examination of the numbers which sum up their experiments, someone will say. I don't believe it. Open a scientific work: you will find there at the end of each analysis a certain number of *sentences* which translate the acquired results. But these sentences have been chosen by the scholar in virtue of a double necessity; on the one hand they must permit one to pass, by means of a sort of abstract symbolism—if I dare say it—to his mathematical formula; on the other, and this is what is remarkable, it is understood that they correspond with the language of common sense, to the images which a non-scientific observer could form for himself of the phenomenon. Now, these sentences taken together compose a coherent discourse on the properties of matter. And this discourse is only a *certain system of images*. If it distinguishes itself from everyday speech, it is above all through this coherence, that is to say through this willingness to exclude the ordinarily contradictory meanings of words. Thus the laws formulated by science, these models of clear expression, refer themselves in reality to ordinary forms of language, emptied of their particular meanings. This proceeding is without danger when applied by the scientists, since of course legal science is only *one* way to speak of what is real, and it is incessantly corrected by facts. But where I smell trickery is when the philosopher or the essayist, seduced by axiomatic clarity,

*"Arrière-pensée" in the French text.

claims to *depart* from these elementary truths which are nothing other than abstractions worked upon our forms of language. I should like to say that more simply. . . . The trickery of a clear deduction consists in that it claims to start from a limited number of acquired facts, when the whole, when the end escapes us! As if it were licit, and even possible, to start from certain elements and to declare them *known*, when one is methodically ignorant of the whole upon which they depend and which is their only measure.

The critic. I confess that I would follow you better if you could show me in Descartes an example of this recourse to the forms of everyday language.

The author. Take the third rule of his method: "To conduct my thoughts by order, commencing with the simplest objects and those most easy to know." There is something that seems clear, and by that I mean conformable to common sense. Yet I distinguish behind this judgment the strangest illusion of the mind: it is a popular maxim. It is held to be so evident that its recall, in the course of a discussion, seems rather like an insolence. This maxim affirms in truth the general necessity of "beginning at the beginning." Descartes who has just assimilated without batting an eyelash the simplicity of an object with the ease to know it—here is another trick of language—is not going to draw back before this other exploit: to state that what is most simple is also what is nearest to us, and that we must begin with that. This beyond a doubt is the worst trick that was ever played upon the writers of ideas. To begin at the beginning! To go from the simple to the complicated! How full of common sense that seems! The fine cliché, the beautiful absurdity, the magnificent postal card! If there is one thing that human experience seems to have established for me—I should say, for eternity!—it's just this, that one must always begin with the end, with the total vision, with the revelation of last ends. The parts can only be known by the whole, and not the inverse.

The critic. I observe once more with curiosity the sliding that takes place in your remarks: I see that you are going to pass without a word of warning to theological propositions. Allow me then to confess myself incompetent, and to watch without further interruption the developments of a thought that is curiously foreign to me. You were speaking of total vision? . . .

The author. Does the expression appear meaningless to you? Measure then once and for all the fullness of my folly. Let me speak my eschatological pidgin-English without constraint.

I was saying that the cartesian deduction works on postal cards. It disposes its benchmarks in good order and then rattles off backwards toward the unknown, its eyes always fixed upon its pack of evidence. We conceive from that that it moves with extraordinary precautions,

verifying at each step the road traveled over: that it knows nothing of its object and would even hold to be an annoying prevention a belief that this object exists for all intents and purposes. For myself, it's almost the exact opposite. Here:—I know that I am in the dark. I know that I can only walk in confusion. But if I do walk, it is because at certain moments I have seen the goal.—I have *believed* I saw it. . . . It is an illuminating, instantaneous vision whose traces are not slow in vanishing from my eyes. Yet that is enough to guide a few steps. I take a chance on the others in the blackness,—in the night of faith or foreboding, sustained by the hope of a renewal of the vision. That is the direction, the orientation of my journey, and that is why I was telling you that it is only possible to understand it from its goal. It is quite just that it should appear absurd to the rational observer.

The critic. I imagine that it is characteristic of such visions to be incommunicable?

The author. We had better say indescribable, for that brings us to its inmost truth, I mean to its instantaneous plentitude which discourages analysis. You will not give the sensation of white by describing the seven colours. That is why the language of vision or faith, if it were pure, would be absolutely inexplicable, and evident. There would be nothing to do but endlessly meditate upon this *form* which is significant of the whole, and of everything in the whole. Of course I cannot give you a single example of such a perfection. But it was necessary to indicate this limit to shed light upon—precisely—all that is between, the penumbra of this discussion. I see now two kinds of language. To simplify things let us bring them back to two modes of expression equally rigorous and yet mutually exclusive. The first would be scientific law. Its conventions are clarity and the absence of contradiction. The second form of expression would be the one whose limit I was trying to give you some feeling of when I spoke of an inexplicable and yet evident language. Perhaps it is the verb *imply* which will best distinguish this latter from the first, whose office is, evidently, to *explain*. Yes, this opposition will help us: to imply reality as it is, and not to explain certain methods of reducing it to the demands of a coherent discourse—that is the role of a parabolical language. Its obscurity stems from that. To speak in parables is to attempt to express a fact or some ideas while recognizing the whole which unites them. Or again it is to be careful not to define them otherwise than *in view* of this last end toward which one is heading. The cartesian or scientific language seeks to reduce facts or ideas to a few isolated elements of measure. It organizes itself quite naturally in discourse, in sentences linked in conformity with deduction. But if I speak in parables, I am only concerned with a certain orientation. It's from the end, once more, that contradictions become clear and resolve themselves, and not from the elements that I would have distinguished

as soon as I had begun. A parable is understood by its end. Like the expedition of Columbus leaving to recognize a visionary America. And this end, this termination, this *telos*, must be indicated by all the hiatuses, all the obscurities, all the paralogsms as something beyond themselves . . . a thing which arguments always founded upon what has preceded them cannot do. This is why the discourse of a prophet is the opposite of discourse. The event alone gives him reason. Thus the parable is an enigma the sense of which is in the vision.

The critic. How do you explain the pleasure that I take from the reading of certain parables whose eschatological meanings, I suppose, escape me completely?

The author. Once I asked a little girl why Jesus spoke to his disciples in parables, when he knew that they would not understand. Here is her answer: Jesus told stories so that they would remember them better later. It is like nuts which have a very hard shell. They can be carried about without spoiling, and, when one is hungry, they are opened.

The critic. Will you allow me one more little question? Who has the right to speak in parables, and to be obscure after the fashion of prophets?

The author. The right? No one, to be sure! No one has any right of this sort, if what you call right is the formal guarantee of usage. But it often happens that someone forgets the great and weighty reasons for being silent, or for speaking only according to right and to decency, in full clarity. It happens that certain mad men, as you will call them, I don't know what ecstasies or released spirits, give themselves up to the hazards of cheating, which flatter them. They call that poetry. However another attitude of being so, and one which is of a sort that it is untouched by the question of right, can be imagined. This is the attitude of a man who has seen something, or who has merely believed he saw something, and who would like to regain his vision and give other men a presentiment of it. A vision does not transmit itself; it's the opposite of a postal card. It is our duty then to face the mind in a certain direction by means of words and sentences capable, as by an irony, of being understood in themselves and to the letter, but whose last meanings cannot be perceived from an *undetermined* angle of vision. I said that the man who has *seen* something must speak the language of prophets and compose parables. If his prophesies are deceptive and his parables fruitless, he is no less a prophet for it. But then he will be judged according to his end. You will confess that in these conditions one would have to have a most singular sort of naïveté to support the risk of being obscure. There is still way for the man of Patmos, who saw the end of our history: the fullness of his vision saves him. But there are less illustrious visions which do not embrace the world from top to bottom in a refulgent inventory. I am speaking of the furtive visions which are to that of the apostle like the Little World to the Great World,—signs of the Whole and of the

End, but signs only, résumés, partial and significant fragments. Surely he who could fix them would recover the whole Apocalypse as Cuvier did prehistory by starting with an isolated vertebra. But forgetfulness comes with the first doubt. . . . Little visions of men of little faith, visions of the end of our short passions: possession, beauty, power,—yet we need no more to reduce us to prophetic speech. It is the same risk, and not the same grandeur. The “sentinels of Juda,” the great prophets, have been justified in their delirium, but what defense will a prophet of the things here-below, a prophet without divine mission, dare to produce which may not also be his judgment?

Jules Supervielle

SUFFERING DEAD MAN

Lost among footsteps and the ruins of planets
Carried over the abyss where the sky is swallowed
I hear the breath in me of marching stars
In the depths of a heart alas I know eternal.

I arrive from the Earth with my human load
Of hopes seized by panic and abrupt memories
But what can be done in the open sky with a heart struggling
As beneath the sun and which has not been able to die.

Have you seen my eyes wandering in those parts
Where the far and the near have no shores.
A blind man without staff and without face and without faith
I look for a body, the one I used to have.

Could I but preserve from the avid spaces
My memories prowling about the house
Cherished faces and my poor reason
From which I watched myself as from a terrace.

May I save at least this shifting treasure
Like a long-haired dog beneath the foam of the sea
Holds between its teeth its half-dead whelp . . .
But here advancing is the mist of the abyss.

The universe where I am gives a cruel sigh
And the throat of the deep sky distends.
Since all rejects me here, even the dream,
To what could these landless places consent?

Jean Paulhan

MODERN PAINTING AND THE POORLY GUARDED SECRET

Every day one hundred reproaches are addressed to a modern painter who is not worth an instant's notice. When a great critic claims that the painters of today leave their pictures unfinished because they are lazy, he shows little beyond one thing: the laziness of the great critic. The Gentleman who does not like a picture because it is ugly does not know that one can love an ugly woman to the point of madness, for charms which surpass those of beauty. As for the other Gentleman, who finds that the green cows and men with crab's claws are not to be painted because man has well-designated hands and cows are not green, he does not even deserve being given a serious answer. He will reproach Fra Angelico with having painted angels, Delacroix for having painted Liberty. No. But events so strange take place that, without Liberty, one would have to renounce understanding them (and he who never felt feathers growing on his back, so much the worse for him). Now painting is made just to remind us of these things: to permit us to believe in them. I don't know if there are too many pictures in the world. I don't believe so. But if there were only one, one would see an angel on the back of a green cow in it, and the most modest graffiti, it is well known, would lend wings to him who does not have them.

And yet there is a soul of truth in these absurd reproaches: it is quite true that modern painting has its danger, or its failing: it is certainly right to paint green cows, or cubes and crabs' claws. And to be content with them. But perhaps it is a little more content with them than it should be. Too emphatically. One might say, too indiscreetly. Fra Angelico made angels as if angels were quite natural. Delacroix showed Liberty as if he had seen her, among men like you and me. But more than one painter today has at least this trait in common with his enemies: he seems to think that it is extraordinary to paint green cows or cubes: that it's climax of boldness, and the artist needs nothing more to be proud. That he can be absolved from the rest.

It is enough to listen to them. Their failing is so evident, that it springs clearly from their words, and from their doctrine: their discovery.

For they have made a discovery: they have found nothing less than the secret of painting. But it is a discovery which they have at once shown themselves unequal to. Of which, it must be believed, that they were not completely worthy (or would it be the drunkenness of discovery that carried them away?) Juan Gris, for example, well observed that there was no classic work that did not conceal a minute calculation of plans and elevations and golden sections. But Juan Gris himself could not always conceal his calculations. Delaunay justly observed that a beautiful picture always murmurs some cosmic rhythm; but Delaunay does not in the least murmur his rhythms, he states them in a loud voice; to tell the truth, he vociferates them. Fernand Léger reasonably supposes that a canvas is necessarily full of delicate allusions to spheres and cubes; but Fernand Léger, if he has a sense of colours, does not perhaps have a sense of delicate allusion. André Lhote established it admirably, by means of schema and plans, that a great composed landscape of Rubens or Breughel suggests, upon a helicoidal background, a whole gearing of cylinders and cones. I am willing to accept this. But I fear that the canvasses of André Lhote sometimes more resemble theorems than suggestions. In short, the painters discovered, between 1900 and 1920, that good painting had always had its allusion and its secret. And they have had nothing more urgent to do than to cry this secret from the house-tops. They have not taken time to return it to shadow, to cover it up again. From which their work has this great unfinished atmosphere.

For (I ask pardon for saying it) an allusion which one explains has no longer the charm of an allusion. A secret cried from the house-tops no longer has, with good reason, the quality of a secret. If the cone or the cylinder has such charm in a Rubens, perhaps it is because it is a cone or a cylinder; but it is primarily because no one notices it. And I need not go far to hunt for proof: for the angles, the spirals, and even the moving plans that Matila Ghyka, Powers or Funch-Heller astutely substitute for the Holy Family or the "Seated Virgin" are very far from offering the least beginning of charm. It is indeed curious to find in Gleizes' maternities the very curve of the Mediaevals. But in the Mediaeval work the curve made a splendid rainbow: in Gleizes it is nothing but a malicious little curve. This is the danger of indiscretion.

I am told that painters have nothing to do with reasoning well, that this is not their rôle, that they must rather make reasoners and intelligent men accept everything in man that goes beyond intelligence

and reason. True! Yet the failing comes from farther back than that; and what I reproach the painters with is not so much their having invented it as their not knowing how to keep it from us. It is mine; it is yours; it is the failing of a whole epoch, inept in mystery to the point where it refuses to recognize it where it is evident; where, if I can say so, it knocks your eyes out.

I am not even thinking of a State which practices integral instruction (be it of morality or poetry), organizes leisure (when the essence of leisure is, obviously, that it escapes organization), extends the rigour of the civil-state so far as to include cows and ducks; demands declaration of our illnesses (though they were secret), and has no other evident ideal than constraining us to live and love in little glass houses. I am not thinking of that because it is not my business. Here it is a question of Fine Arts, and another example will be more striking; the example of houses, precisely.

It is certain that modern dwellings, say those of Le Corbusier, are lovely and beautiful: that air and light circulate through them freely; that in them one takes pleasure in sitting by the window and watching people go by; in listening (through the walls) to the disputes of the neighbors, in bringing up gold fish. In short, excellent machines to live in, and the latest model even offers, it seems, a system of screws and pulleys which permit it to turn with the sun. Really only one thing is lacking. One thing, so small that they have been able to forget it: an obscure and hidden corner, preferably dirty, to which the dweller can sometimes retire and think of nothing. For man is so made that he also has in himself something that from time to time refuses sunlight, or neighbors, and vomits the State, nature, and good reasons.

Did I say that indiscretion was the failing of the painting of today? In any case it is assuredly its danger. It is a danger that the ancients seem to have known little about: it gives the best moderns, once they have been able to avoid it, an inexplicable greatness and a new weight. For in other times it was enough for the painter to have his secrets. Now he must have something rare, something indubitably more difficult, and which was in other times in the care of metaphysics and religion; yet, so necessary that, if he does not possess it, his methods seem meager, his drawing artificial, his colours light, his subject itself poor and shabby. This is what I would like to call the sense of the hidden. It is the sense which, too evidently, Ingres or David lacked, and which Goya possessed; which Degas or Bonnard lacked and which is possessed by Braque and Roualt. If it is not given a place, aesthetics are rather light books.

Jean Wahl

THE LAND OF HAPPINESS

Beauteous II

Yesterday I sat facing beauty.
How would I tell of
Those vast lands
Behind that toneless voice
Lands mobile and calm,
Of flame and of snow.

Dreams

When I felt her bare arm near my hand,
It was the coolness of a river
In the calm of summer.
When I touched her hand,
I felt the mystery of a life warm and secret.
When I dreamed of her sleep,
Her great sleeping body dreamed of other delights.

Nostalgia

Beneath your triumphant shock of hair
Lies the soft yellowish plain
And the dreaming eyes alien to all lands.
It is my country, it is my country,
Here, beneath this skull where no thought stirs.

Country Company

I walk endlessly in this odor
This was not especially this strong male odor
But a song quieted in the morning or evening
Grasses mingled beneath the wind, and breathing,
I whirled in it, I drowned myself in a light drunkenness.
A mist was rising in the meadow,
Distant ideas rising as if they were quite near,
You were your idea, your image,
No idea, no image
Shining in my transpierced sky.

Loys Masson

(From) THOMAS WILSON

The Pensive Heart Knows Not Where It Goes

The pensive heart knows not where it goes. What will ever equal the weight of thoughts that Thomas Wilson carried with him, the heritage of so many years of adventures and glory? Thomas Wilson's heart was a crucible into which the world flowed, and yet was but a small thing; it was through the human and the divine, the torments of duality, the plurality of worlds, the thomist philosophy, the philosopher's stone and the Great Wall of China that this glorious viscera carved its way, pumping knowledge from the veins and transferring to the arteries decanted knowledge, ready for books. . . . The pensive heart, once it is on a road, no longer knows where it is. Thomas Wilson had hardly gone one or two kilometers from the convent than he imagined himself to have arrived in some far-distant place, Thibet, perhaps, and he entered the first building he came to, under the impression it was a bonzery, with a demand for holy vestments.

Let him who has never appeared distracted cast the first stone: it was a hospital. Doctors and nurses rushed up, and asked him a thousand questions which he did not answer (since he sincerely believed himself to be in Thibet, and Thibetan was one of the five languages he did not speak.) Certain doctors believed they were dealing with a mute seeking cure by means of surgical intervention beneath the tongue, certain others believed him mad, and still others an amnesia victim. But a nurse, having noticed the severed stems that the man bore on his forehead,* was suddenly convinced that he was the wooden headed invalid who was having a child, as Jupiter had the muses (as well as other nurselings), and in her enthusiastic surprise she jumped and danced and knocked down everything about her. It was necessary to calm her by sprinkling cold water on her temples; after this the superintendent of the hospital had Thomas Wilson put on the outfit of the critically ill, and gave him a bed.

But as soon as he felt a pillow beneath his head, the Valiant One, who had solemnly vowed to die in his bed, believed that he was being condemned to capital punishment. Heroically he repressed a sweat of anguish, and, as he was drawing near the seas of the infinite, he hurled forth the purest of his cries of affliction, one nourished in his breast since his youth, and which he had reserved for his last moment:

* Humility had caused two lily stalks to sprout from Thomas Wilson's forehead; he cut them and left them in the convent garden before resuming his journey.

"Thalassa! Thalassa!"

The youngest doctor rushed again to the bedside of the sick man. "Heavens," he cried at the peak of his excitement, "what have you said?"

"Thalassa! . . ." Thomas Wilson repeated feebly, his eyelids already closed.

"Oh my heart!" the doctor murmured staggering. "Oh, to find you thus when I had given up searching for you! my beloved master, imitated in silence since I read *Anabasis* in college, Xenophon, my dear Xenophon. . . ."

He began to declaim a passage from what was for him the book of books; then, still expressing himself in Greek, he made the dying man understand that he was not in Thibet (Thomas Wilson was ceaselessly repeating these two syllables) but in a friendly hospital—and even, after a serious examination, that he was not in the least ill.

"Master," he said, his eyes blazing, "If you will shine in my life I will be your faithful poodle. . . . And I will begin my service by serving you a lunch, for I know instinctively that Xenophon is a hearty eater. . . ."

No sooner said than done. The table was set. And, between two courses, they discussed the Persians and—medicine being unable to resolve itself to not putting in a word—the epidemics that the immense armies of the King of kings must infallibly have brought with them.

In Which Thomas Wilson Conducts Himself, As Might Be Expected, Like A Gallant Cavalier

Thomas Wilson and the doctor we have spoken of were dining together. They were speaking of galloping consumption—and in their fervor to pursue the enemy with their anathemas, they were making great gestures, now imitating its tigress-like bonds towards the loins of the honest man, now uncoiling in the air the invisible lasso with which it pulls down the orphan without help in his distress, now finally telling how it crouches on the banks of health and then suddenly rushes like a rhinoceros toward the maiden without giving her time to say but.

"Horrible, horrible," exclaimed the doctor, "horrible monster! I'd like to take it about the waist and throw it down! . . ."

"Drown it in its own blood!" Thomas Wilson stamped.

"But it's agile, the strumpet!" said the doctor wiping his moustache which was whitened with cream-sauce.

"Like the chamois himself, or like a capricious goat. . . ."

"Heavens!" the doctor cried suddenly, "my conjugal purity!"

"Would you be the object of one of its lascivious invitations?" asked Thomas Wilson. "Doctor, purity will ever find a defender in me. At any price. Let my body be a rampart for you. . . ."

The doctor pointed before him with his finger. "A daughter of joy. . . ." he breathed. "She is staring me down, in thought she is stretching her arms toward me, she is satisfying her spiritual embrace. And my wife was waiting, this very evening, for my twenty-fifth chromosome to make a boy. Alas! Alas! . . ."

"Keep your twenty-fifth chromosome," said Thomas Wilson nobly. "I will take care of this girl."

And behind the barrage-fire of hundreds and hundreds of glances that he forthwith opened, the doctor was able to make his retreat.

The Combat Of The Gallant Cavalier: In Which The Gallant Cavalier Is Vanquished In Turn By The Eros-Hecate Conjugation, By The Nurse Of Jupiter, And Finally By Auguste Comte.

The daughter of joy gave the hero a long look which, a few instants later, she identified as a lunar look; and when the other asked her why she mingled the moon with her desires, she answered:

"Hecate possesses a marked influence over the sea and the swelling belly of woman; why would this not also be true of men who come in tempestuous waves to beat against the boom that our beauty makes upon the ocean of days?"

"O poetess!" exclaimed Thomas Wilson with admiration. "O blessed meeting! Are you not brown Sappho herself?"

"You are nourished with ancient history," declared the daughter of joy.

"It keeps so warm in the stomach!"

"I prefer pickled goose . . ." said the young woman with an unfeigned sincerity.

"Just heaven, can it be! Clear dweller of Cytheria, young body worthy of the gods. . . ."

The young body worthy of the gods gave him to understand that it would gladly imbibe some alcohol destined to warm it on this glacial evening. But Thomas Wilson, lost in his olympian dream, asked the waiter for ambrosia. This other shook his head sadiy and said: temporarily out of it, sir . . ."—"then pour us some nectar, in that case!" Thomas Wilson consented. The waiter however observed an embarrassed silence.

"Calm yourself," said the girl kindly, "this gentleman is having a mythological dream. . . . Give me a *fine*. And will you have one, too, my beloved?"

"*Fine*, ah! beautiful word, symbolic of your person! Fine, royal word, found one evening in the depths of a bar to depict she who has made my forty years the gift of her dear body. O luminous finding, benediction of the language! . . . Yes, waiter, listen to these vermillion

lips,—yes, Ganymede, pour us two glasses from your finest bottle, coarse still in comparison with this skin!”

They drank long. Then Thomas Wilson, stirred up by amorous hunger, made his desire public:

“Will you conduct me, dear heart, into your marble and sapphire palace?”

“To be sure,” said the daughter of joy, “you have only to start out, but first I have something to ask you.”

“That something is yours . . .” replied Thomas gallantly.

“Listen,” continued the young woman, “I have long run down the hollowed shore of pleasures, and at this time of my life, I must have the inhabitual, the unexpected, and I look to you for this. . . . I have had a he-goat’s hide, which my father sent me from the country, tanned. You will put it on and so procure me, at the heart of this stifling city, a rural illusion. . . .”

The hero made a mechanical gesture of astonishment, and then suddenly light dawned in him.—“O disguise!” he cried. “No, what is disguise is your woman’s body. Blessed be the adventures which have brought me to this place where I find you at last, you whom I have always sought, nurse of Zeus, goat, goat Amalthea! . . .”

“But . . .” hazarded the young woman.

“O the bleating I believe I hear when you speak to me! . . . Here am I charged by the gods to re-people Olympus devastated by the positivist philosophers. O bleating, make yourself heard a second time! . . .”

The daughter of joy, seized with fear, had disappeared while Thomas Wilson was still going into ecstasies. Suddenly he no longer saw her. He swore, blaming for this disappearance the positivist philosophy with which he had been watered in his youth.

“But I will have the last word against thee, ignoble Auguste Comte,” he bellowed, “even if I have to go a hundred and a thousand leagues. I will start out this evening. Come to me, all the means of locomotion of modern science! They steal Amalthea from me here—I will find her again in her isle. . . .”

Jean Cassou

SONNET WRITTEN IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Drink this cup of shadows, and then sleep.

We will take your misery like a crown

and we will wear it to the gardens of death.

Then you like a shivering somnambulist,

sliding through the door which no one passes,
will go to gather the golden branched myrtle.
Its brilliance and that of the red anemone,
in the night made young will guide you to the banks

of true life and pure accomplishment.
There dreams are sure, terrible, and powerful.
In the early blueness of an eternal tomorrow

they will all come to meet you, healed spirit,
and you will recognize, holding each other by the hand,
your great sisters: Love, Liberty, Poetry.

André Spire

AND TOMORROW

*The merchants among the people shall
hiss at thee.*—Ezekiel. 27. 36.

So you are going to have it, your dream,
Your Society of Nations!
The wolf and the lamb will graze together.
The lion, like the bullock, will eat straw.
And a little child will lead them.
From our swords we will forge plowshares,
From the iron of our spears, pruning-hooks;
And we will learn war no more.

There it is!
It took ten million men,
Ten million men lying on the earth,
Bleeding, riddled, ripped open,
Rattling in the throat,
Without water for their fever,
Without a kiss for their lips,
It took ten million men
For this old childish dream,
For such a simple thing.

Producing and selling,
Buying and keeping,

And giving, and dreaming,
And writing and sculpting and painting,
And leaving one's neighbor alone—
This, then, was so difficult!
But each time a people, its fortune made,
Settled down and said to the others:
"Now, all is well;
Be gentle, be just,
Respect our possessions,"
Someone else felt his muscles harden,
His hand become more agile,
His pen more adroit,
His sword more incisive,
And in his turn saw the old sleeping breath
Mount from the earth,
Whirl about with its sand and its heat
And take him and tell him:
"Command!
You are the greatest, the best.
You are the Sun of the world.
The others must warm themselves with your fire.
And if they refuse
You burn them."

Ten million men were enough!
Ten million men, ten million men!

You're going to have your Society of Nations!
Everyone is going to give up his arms.
Everyone is going to give up his ships.
No more blows, no more shocks, no more hates!
We're going to open a ledger
We're going to weigh everything
In a super-precise balance:
For the just man, the reward.
For the evil man, the just punishment.
And the son will pay no more for his father's fault.

Ten million men! Ten million men!
How little that is, my God! how little!
For such a precious thing!

Ah! Found it well, this Society of Nations!
Defend it against all the heads!

Defend it against all the fists!
Ponder, meditate, deliberate,
Weigh your letters, your signs, your lines;
Tighten your words, crush your words.
Create debates, procedures,
Defenses, interdictions,
Tribunals, Great Counsels,
The Supreme Court;
And regulate and bind it fast;
And above all do not forget
The executory formula.

Forget nothing, forget no one.
The baron, the soldier
Who shamed you and bled you—
You have them docile, under your heel,
With their crosses and gold stripes;
But be prudent, be on guard,
The least forgetfulness can spoil everything.
Have them all appear before your bench.
Send through all the earth
Inquirers, inspectors, comptrollers,
Who will explore and guess and seek,
Who will hunt in every garret,
In barn lofts and attics,
Beneath every forehead, in every heart.

Of course you know that once . . . once . . .
An angered god-mother
Predicted that the king's daughter,
If she touched a spindle,
Would prick her hand and die.

Of course you know that the king at once
Made it known through the whole kingdom
That he forbade, by edict,
All the women to spin,
And even to have, at home,
A spindle,
Upon pain of death.
The sergeants and the men at arms
Went out to hunt spindles;
Gathered them up, and heaped them up,
And made a bonfire of them.

But the sergeants in their rounds,
Forgot one little tower
Where, in a little room,
A crone who could not read,
And who never went out,
Continued to spin.

One fine day, the young princess,
While playing, climbed into the tower . . .

See, behind his counter,
The cautious, the amiable merchant.
He arranges, he brings forth, he offers;
He solicits;
He smiles:

"Your victory is my victory.
I serve, I unite the nations.
What you make well, I buy:
Your roses, your ribbons, your robes;
And I bring you in exchange
What others make well:
Cotton, flax, wool,
Purple and licorice,
Cinnamon and nutmeg,
Dates, whole cloves,
Pomegranates and pamplemouses,
Pears in syrup, ox-tongues,
White lards and golden oils. . . ."

Ah! Digest, my friend, digest!
He is docile, your servant.
He follows you, he gloats over you, he loves you.
He watches all your wishes;
And if you can to please him,
Swell, exaggerate, accelerate
The digestive system.
He is there, so humble, watching.
While your body is emptying itself
He is there to fill it.
If you need, to laugh,
The foam of light wines,
Coffee for your dreams,
Morphine for your pains,
He brings it; you are free!

What does it matter for him if you tremble;
Provided his wife eats
And that she can suckle the little ones;

That she has coal in her cellar
And kerosene in her lamp;
And that she has someday, two servants,
A Louis the Sixteenth bedroom,
A Henry the Second dining room,
And later a butler;

A saltire of three hundred pearls,
Turkish carpets in her antechamber,
Gobelins in ther drawing-rooms.

And that she presides over at least one committee,
Spends June in Normandy,
October in Saint-Jean-De-Luz.

Provided he has a hundred and twenty-five
 HP sixteen cylinder motor;
An Empire château in Oise,
A shoot in Loiret;

That the cabinet members visit
His factories, his warehouses;
That at his teas the academies,
Their mouth full of little cakes,
Will tell him beneath his false Memlings:
"You are the Sun of the world.
Other men, all the others,
Must warm themselves in your rays.
Their shores, their hills, their plains—
What have they done with them, what will they do with them?
Throw out your ships and your roads,
Your water-courses, your rails, your stations.
If they resist, we have papers;
What we say in them ten times
The people believes is its own voice.
If they resist, ask us for men,
For flamethrowers and cannons. "

And tomorrow, the girls
And tomorrow, the mothers will weep.

January-February, 1919.

Herbert Steiner

PAUL VALÉRY

Whenever an eminent person enters the scene, there is an immediate change of spiritual climate, of premises and standards. This is what happened when toward the end of the First World War Paul Valéry made his appearance. The work of such a man changes not only the present but the past as well. As he proceeds his contemporaries make their demands and their judgements. They are unjust: for he is more strict with himself than they.

* * *

Valéry's legacy is greater than is supposed. He had not yet given it all. Like his Leonardo, "he leaves the fragments of several great undertakings." We shall see him differently than we did: the "official" Valéry, the "difficult" author will disappear; the solitary man he always was, will come into view. A man who all his life maintained the stress of his own thought. (A stress the deep furrows of his face bear witness to. There are the lines he wrote under a photograph of himself:

Que si j'étais placé devant cette effigie
Inconnu de moi-même, ignorant de mes traits,
A tant de plis affreux d'angoisse et d'énergie
Je lirais mes tourments et me reconnaîtrais.

* * *

Who was he? A young man of twenty-five, shy, critical, severe; his conversation gave those who knew him the sense of a mind of uncommon power and insight and rare promise; his few essays left them half bewildered. A man of thirty-five, lost, it seemed, in a blind alley. A man of fifty suddenly emerging as one of the great poets and essayists of his language, At fifty-five he is a world-famous author, and so, unknown; a man who belongs to the world, not always to himself. But for fifty years his being (and his handwriting) did not change. He was fascinating in his detachment, his sadness and courtesy, in the ingenuousness of his rare mind, his perfect simplicity and directness. For some his climate was too rigorous. "But without looking for them he had won the most extraordinary constancies." He said it of Mallarmé. We can say it of him.

* * *

I saw Valéry for the last time at the end of 1939 in Geneva at the University's celebration of the Racine tricentenary. The first time I saw him was at the end of 1922 when he spoke in Zurich on Europe as a function and on the definition of European man. I felt then, at once, that it would take years before I could hope, if ever, not to disappoint him too much.

* * *

Valéry, from the time of his marriage, in 1900, lived in the house where Berthe Morisot, Manet's sister-in-law, had had her apartment. There, for her and a few friends, Mallarmé had read his conference on Villiers de l'Isle Adam ("One man, given to dreams, comes here to speak of another, now dead"). On the piano in Valéry's living-room lay the large edition of Poe's "Raven," translated by Mallarmé, illustrated by Manet, and the Bodoni Racine. In a chest of drawers beside the door, were the proofs of the "*Coup de Dés*," seldom disturbed, covered with dust. A few weeks before his sudden death, the last time they met, the Master had consulted the younger poet on certain details of this unprecedented experiment of his. Valéry showed us the large sheets, set up almost like an orchestra score. Leafing slowly through them, he pointed to some spots on the paper: "Look, drops from his candles." In Valéry's narrow study—the high shelves crowded with packages of notes and manuscripts, the floor covered with books, not always of his choosing, that had been sent him—there hung the photograph of Mallarmé and Renoir of which he speaks in his book on Degas.

Once as we took leave he said: "What, you have been to Paris, and you didn't go to the Rue de Rome!" There, a young man from the Midi, he had come to one of the famous Tuesdays and had spoken, before the silent disciples, in reply to the words of the Master. "And, what was rather unusual, a dialogue developed!" Valéry said it lovingly, and with pride.

* * *

He valued the long unbroken line, persistence of new attempts, continuous development. The times in which he lived were not of a sort to make him feel differently. His memory dismissed things and long afterwards recovered them fresh and intact. He spoke of "Nature's slow maternal rhythm." The pulse of his own being seemed to predestine him to a longer life. One of his most beautiful poems, "Palm," speaks of that pulse and rhythm, and of the creative force of patience.

* * *

His exquisite courtesy rarely disclosed how impatient he was. It could not have been otherwise: his thought was too swift, too penetrating. "I inherit that from my mother, a nervous, impatient woman. We always quarreled about little things,— visiting hours and so on,—never about big ones. It was the friction of diamond on diamond."

Like her he often said: "Sono stufo di tutto," "I'm sick of it all." But what always overcame his *taedium vitae*, was his curiosity, his gift of observation.

* * *

In the course of our first conversation he said: "There are two kinds of scepticism. One is very common, especially in France, it's superficial,

it doesn't approach problems, and it mustn't be confused with the other—the real one. In the old schoolbooks there used to be an anecdote about the Maréchal de Saxe. Once on a campaign his horse needed shoeing. A blacksmith brings the shoes; the prince takes hold of one and breaks it in his hand. Others are brought him, stronger ones, and each time he does the same thing. "That," concluded Valéry, "is how the truly sceptical mind looks for arguments strong enough to resist it, and doesn't find any."

He said, too: "To invent is to remember." Goethe had the same thought.

* * *

For years Valéry had lived with a sense of dangers to come. Born in 1871, the year of France's defeat and of the Commune, he died at the close of these last terrible years. What he said after the First World War is truer than ever today: "The storm has died away, and still we are restless, uneasy, as if the storm were about to break. Almost all the affairs of men remain in a terrible uncertainty. We are a very unfortunate generation, whose lot has been to see the moment of our passage through life coincide with the arrival of great and terrifying events, the echo of which will resound through all our lives. One can say that all the fundamentals of our world have been affected by the war. But among all these injured things is the *Mind*."

It was out of this sense of catastrophe that the significant essays he called "metapolitical" were born. There are very few works in which future times, should they wish to look back upon our own, will find such an analysis of the first half of our century. For Valéry's gift was that of the great diagnostician. He registered very distant vibrations. To maintain the independence and autonomy of the spirit throughout the threats and the crises—to that he devoted two decades between two wars. He envisioned the European "upright on the promontory of thought." It was his own attitude.

* * *

In the early hours of the morning, he sat down to his note-books, while the day was still fresh, still unused. Few have spoken as he has of dawn, of the auroral moment before the beginning of life. The process of becoming was the spectacle he never wearied of. (Many passages in his work attest it, perhaps most perfectly the marvellous prose poem "*Comme le temps est calme*," the third of his "A B C.")

* * *

The prose poems were intended to form a volume of his works. They are not so well known. Among them is the "A B C." He kept working at it in new versions, may never have completed it; some parts of it he published. Its plan and structure were exacting and severe:

the letters of the alphabet were each to represent an hour of the day.

* * *

Valéry's pages on himself, on Mallarmé, on his own late return to poetry, regarded as a whole, constitute chapters of an autobiography, uncommon and of very high rank. It is the testimony of poets that teaches us about poetry as nothing else can. No period we know of has had such rich documents of this sort as our own time. We owe some of the most significant to Valéry.

* * *

Men may be measured by the questions they ask. There was something hellenic in Valéry's way of standing before problems and asking his questions. They arose out of the concerns of a single and singular individual; he probed so deep and spoke so directly that they became universally valid. His temperament was quite as individual as his mind. (And we have said nothing of the man whom we loved.)

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE

William Van O'Connor

LETTER FROM MANILA

If there has been any considerable amount of literature written in the Philippines since December, 1941, it has not yet been published. And there seems to be some question about the possibility of Filipino literature continuing to develop, at least in the near future, to a degree whereby the range of English literature might noticeably be affected.

Before the war Manuel E. Arguilla's *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife* and Arturo Rotor's *The Wound and the Scar* were held up as able achievements in the short story. No really good Filipino novel was written. In poetry, some of it with a proletarian cast despite there being no political group to oppose the wealthy-families rule, José Garcia Villa, Carlos Bulosan, Ralph Zulueta da Costa, Angela Manalong Gloria and Francisco Arcellana held the foremost positions. Villa was looked to as a leader long after he took up residence in the United States. Work in the essay and in criticism, with a few exceptions, was negligible.

Before the war, too, there were many magazines concerned largely with literary subjects. Even the newspapers gave full pages to reviews and the airing of critical squabbles. Eager for development, Filipinos borrowed from every corner of the American scene. In reading through old issues which escaped the fires and dynamiting, one sees local short story writers evaluated in their relationships to Anderson, Hemingway, Parker, Steele and Saroyan.* The poets too are related to Whitman, Sandburg, the Imagists, E. E. Cummings, Eliot and the Symbolists.

Shortly before Pearl Harbor the opinions of Filipino writers were being focussed and given collective strength through the Philippine Writers' League. Even President Quezon whose pronouncements of policy usually began with "I" met with them and recognized their power. Unfortunately their strength did not survive the Occupation and the League cannot now be revived because those members who worked neither for nor with the Japs are less forgiving of those who did than are the present officials of the Philippine Government. A saddening number chose to write for the Japanese Information Bureau although another few when pressed for contributions submitted only pieces concerned with inoffensive historical themes. (Zuluetta da Costa in declining to write an anthem for the newly "liberated" Commonwealth explained to a Filipino go-between that if he were clapped into Fort Santiago as a consequence of his refusal the life of the go-between would be brief. Although forced to sell his books and his wife's jewelry for subsistence he was not further molested.) The collaborationist issue which cuts sharply through the pre-war groups may seriously hinder writers from moving ahead with anything resembling singleness of purpose.

Americans might suggest Carlos Romulo as the figure around whom a new movement might develop. Native writers, though somewhat amused at the success of his florid sentences in drawing American attention to Filipino problems, recognize the service Romulo is doing. They quickly point out, however, that he has used his position as the voice of the Philippines to amass a personal fortune. He is said to be held in slight respect by the officials with whom he works. When Quezon, so the story goes, after noting that Romulo had been comfortably in Washington when Bataan fell, protested the publication of *I Saw Bataan Fall*, he was placated by Romulo's explanation that the book and motion picture rights had already been sold and by the until now unfulfilled promise that the proceeds would be given to Filipino relief. (If, by chance, this story is either distorted or untrue, it is strange that neither

* In one place I found this comment: "These are the sophisticated writers who read sophisticated American magazines like the *New Yorker*, *Coronet* and *Esquire*."

Romulo nor any among his associates has taken occasion to deny it.) On the score of insufficient artistry alone, however, Romulo is not the man about whom younger writers are likely to gather.

The healthiest sign to be noted in reading through the pre-war publications is the effort the "ineradically romantic" Filipino writers were making to "heed the call of realism." There was a growing sharpness to their satire (much of it concerned with the degree of pigment in the skin) and an increasing readiness to attack political and Church abuses. Garcia Villa, who was kicked out of the University of the Philippines because in one of his poems he compared breasts to coconuts, early helped to establish not only a pattern of defiance but a critical awareness of literary form. It remains to be seen whether the post V-J Day magazines (prior to V-J Day the *Army*, *Time*, *Newsweek* and the black market held all the paper stock) continue to pour a leaven into the *mores*.

The magazines which have recently sprung up are being used to further the political fortunes of Osmena or Roxas although *The Fil-American*, edited by a young Philadelphian named Eric Raymond, is statedly to better Philippine-American relations. One pre-war group, centering around Manuel Viray, whose poetry features the immobile images of MacLeish, is ready to bring out the first issue of *Direction*. And *The Express*, the newspaper of the guerillas, is scheduled to publish a weekly literary supplement on the order of the pre-war *Herald Mid-Week Magazine*, in which many of the best poems, short stories and reviews were run.

The one literary "advance" of the Occupation was in Tagalog (encouraged along with Nippongo by the Japs), the language of Luzon, which is being half-heartedly imposed as the national language on the people in other parts of the archipelago. Quezon frankly admitted that the Members of the Constitutional Convention advocated the adoption of Tagalog because they "were friends of Tagalog writers and they knew that they were going to get votes by advocating that plan." Quezon added that he personally supported the measure because a common language is needed for solidarity and English, which is poorly taught and badly spoken, has not during the forty odd years of American domination become the national language. He did not explain how Tagalog, the language of a relative few, will be well taught, easily spoken and readily accepted. However, there is some rather confused talk now going on about a Basic Tagalog. Nor did he consider that the use of a relatively "primitive" dialect precludes the solving of the complex economic, scientific and intellectual problems attendant upon the evolution of a cohesive society.

The writing of prose rather than poetry is the test of a people's

ability to use a language, particularly one not their own. If English were the sole or even the major language of the Philippines, the gains made thus far would be more considerable than they are. Those of the generation of Romulo who were taught by American teachers have a greater ease with the language than those who have been taught by native teachers. As an organism the English used in the Philippines is not self-nourishing. The most competent Filipino writers are obliged to renew the vitality of the language through readings in American and English writers, but even they find it difficult to follow spoken English into many of the byways that are explored when conversation in literary and philosophical matters reaches a certain heat. Once past the difficulties of pronunciation, which is probably an indifferent matter, some among the American Forces have found it possible to carry on conversation in a mixed Filipino and American group on two distinct levels. The constantly evolving connotations of English words—over and above the level of slang—slip past Filipino ears. English is not indigenous and usage therefore frequently takes bastardized forms. In downtown Manila one may see a cafe and bar called “Pick Up Cafe” or a beauty shop called “The Elegant.”

There seems to be a limited recognition among professional writers of the flesh and blood relationship between the language of the street and the schoolroom and the language of literature. On the eve of the war, Salvador P. Lopez published *Literature and Society*, a competent and informative critical study. Yet no one has brought the focus of attention down to the point where it belongs: to the study of the local vocabulary and idiom in relationship to English and American usage. Even certain of the critics could profit by sustained study of exposition. Over and above this problem the Filipino writer still has the task of assimilating Oriental, Spanish and American heritages before he can hope to write an idiom in which the intellectual and emotional fibres are woven into a distinct Filipino pattern.

Frank Jones

A GARLAND OF JACQUES PREVERT

One of the first things I saw in Paris last January was a tiny magazine called *L'Eternelle Revue*. It had a cover design by Picasso and labeled itself as having been edited, in its underground days, by Paul Eluard. This was the first number of its above-ground series, and I don't know if its eternity outlasted the second. But in the evening murk and chill of the Gare St. Lazare it was radiant, and I bought it. It contained some poems by Jacques Prévert, of whom I had never heard. They entranced me. They were gay, gay in 1945, gay without being silly, sad without making a show of gloom.

Since then I have found out a few things about Jacques Prévert. He has been writing poems and film scenarios for years. His earlier films were surrealist in tendency, and his later ones include two that are known in the States, *Quai des Brumes* (Port of Shadows) and *Le Jour se Lève* (Daybreak), and one that will be: *Les Enfants du Paradis*. His poems have appeared in many magazines, but not in a book yet.

Six months later, in Paris on leave from Germany, I met Jacques Prévert at the Café de Flore. I had just seen *Les Enfants du Paradis*. It lasts over three hours, and is a richly romantic history of a mime, a tragedian, a murderer and a nobleman who all love the same woman. Prévert asked me what part I liked best, and I replied without hesitating (or thinking): "The pantomimes." These acts—by Jean-Louis Barrault as the mime Deburau—are of course the only parts of the picture in which Prévert's brilliant dialogue does not figure at all, and my answer, I learned later, greatly amused the friend who had introduced me to Prévert. But he had written the pantomimes too—that is, thought up their stories and gestures—so I was let off easily.

I then told the poet how I had discovered his work and translated *Inventory* on the Western Front, and he seemed very pleased. In his blue polo-shirt and old slouch hat he looks pleased most of the time. He is at the height of his career these days, and my friend said he is the King of the Café de Flore. Everyone who entered it came up and shook his hand.

We talked a little about American writers. He can't stand Saroyan, but likes Steinbeck and Faulkner and considers Caldwell's *God's Little Acre* the best book of the century. Other phenomena he admires are New York City and Bert Brecht. He is, in fact, more like Brecht than like any living French writer. He writes ballads, too.

He had two comments on *Inventory*: that his aim in it was to convey (broad grin at this point) a "subjective objectivity," and that he is fond of the raccoons in the Paris zoo because of the way they eat, dipping their food in water before putting it into their mouths (convincing imitation at this point). This characteristic of raccoons is of course better conveyed by the French word for the animal, *raton laveur* (washer rat).

All the poems I have translated are from *L'Eternelle Revue* except *The Sultan*, which appeared in *Poésie* 45.

THE SULTAN

In the mountains of Kashmir
Lives the Sultan of Salamandragore
In the daytime he has lots of people killed
And when evening comes he goes to sleep
But the dead find hiding-places in his nightmares
And devour him
One night he wakes up
And utters a loud yell
And the executioner wrenched from his sleep
Comes smiling up to the foot of the bed
If there were no living
Said the Sultan
There would be no dead
And the executioner answered "Right"
Well then let all the rest go that way
And let no more be said about it
"Right," said the executioner

This is all he can say
And all the rest went that way as the Sultan put it
Women, children, his and others'
The calf, the wolf, the wasp and the gentle sheep
The good hale old man and the sober camel
Actresses in theatres, the king of animals
Banana planters, witticism-makers
And cocks and their hens, eggs with their shells
And no one is left to bury anybody at all
That does it
Said the Sultan of Salamandragore
But stay here executioner
Here close to me
And kill me
If ever I go back to sleep.

PARIS AT NIGHT

Three matches lit one after the other in the night
The first to see all of your face
 The second to see your eyes
 The last to see your mouth
And all of darkness to call all this to mind
 As I clasp you in my arms.

THE BOUQUET

What are you doing little girl
With those flowers freshly cut
What are you doing young lady
With those flowers those withered flowers
What are you doing pretty woman
With those flowers that are fading
What are you doing old woman
With those flowers that are dying
—I am waiting for the victory.

AND THE FEAST GOES ON

Bolt upright at the bar
On the stroke of ten
A tall plumber and zinc-worker
In his Sunday best it's Monday though
Sings for himself alone
Sings that it's Thursday
That he'll stay away from school
That the war's over
 And work too
That life is so lovely
 And the girls so pretty
And swaying at the bar
But guided by his plumb-line
 He stops dead in front of the barman
Three farmers will come by and pay you
 Then vanishes in the sunlight
 Without paying for his drinks
Vanishes in the sunlight continuing his song.

INVENTORY

A stone
two houses
three ruins
four gravediggers
a garden
some flowers

a raccoon

a dozen oysters a lemon a loaf of bread
a ray of sunlight
a tidal wave
six musicians
a door with its doormat
a gentleman decorated with the Legion of Honor

another raccoon

a sculptor who sculps Napoleons
the flower called marigold
two lovers on a big bed
a tax-collector a chair three turkeys
an ecclesiastic a carbuncle
a wasp
a floating kidney
a racing-stable
an undeserving son two Dominicans three grasshoppers a folding chair
two sporting ladies an uncle from Cyprus
a Mother of Sorrows three sugar-daddies two goats by Alphonse Daudet
a Louis XV shoe
a Louis XVI armchair
a Henry II sideboard two Henry III sideboards three Henry IV sideboards
a battered desk-drawer
a ball of string two safety-pins an old gentleman
a Winged Victory an accountant two accountants' assistants a man of the world two surgeons three vegetarians
a cannibal
a colonial expedition a complete horse half a pint of good blood a tsetse-fly
a lobster American style a garden French style
two apples English style
a lorgnette a footman an orphan an iron lung
a Glorious Day
a Week of Kindness
a Month of Mary
a Terrible Year
a minute of silence
a second of inattention
and . . .

five or six raccoons

a little boy going to school in tears
 a little boy coming out of school laughing
 an ant
 two flints
 seventeen elephants a district judge on vacation sitting in a deck-chair
 a landscape with lots of green grass in it
 a cow
 a bull
 two fine love-affairs three large organs one veal Marengo
 an Austerlitz sunset
 a siphon of seltzer
 a glass of white wine with lemon juice
 a Tom Thumb a Breton pilgrimage a stone Calvary a rope-ladder
 two Latin Sisters three dimensions twelve apostles a thousand and one nights
 thirty-two positions six parts of the world five cardinal points ten years
 loyal and efficient service seven deadly sins two fingers of the hand ten
 drops before every meal thirty days jail fifteen of same in solitary
 confinement five minutes intermission
 and . . .
 quite a few raccoons

LETTER FROM CAMBRIDGE

Dear Norman Macleod:

You ask me what the state of affairs is at Cambridge and I am afraid the answer (as you may have expected) is "much the same as anywhere else in England." A good deal of poetry is being written and most of it needn't be read. Two new publications, *Focus* and *The Bridge*, are Cambridge's contribution to the spate of such ventures all over the country. It is possible and even conventional to regard such facts as encouraging, as symbolic of growth and vitality or, in the fashionable jargon, of "the living tree putting forth its branches." But I think such optimism should be qualified by several admissions. First, the increase in activity is not altogether genuine. It has been inflated by the stuffiness and caution of the better established magazines which have forced young writers to start magazines of their own and then pad them out to respectable dimensions. Secondly the startling increase in demand—any intelligently edited review can now expect a four figure circulation—is due overwhelmingly to an increase in the number of adolescent readers. Such a situation makes popular, and even traditional, the casual unorganized writing which war-time lethargy has generated. Thirdly, though I do not doubt that there has been a considerable increase in the desire to write, I doubt very seriously if such a desire, of itself, can ever produce good writing. What matters is the presence, even the obsessing presence of governing values about which writing is possible.

Yet I hope that such comments, gloomy as they are, are more than merely destructive. If they imply anything it is the urgent need for criticism. I do not mean simply literary criticism though literary criticism proceeds from similar assumptions. What I am trying to recommend is that Maximum of self-vigilance

which can only be ensured by the presence and preservation of responsible critical standards. At its worst criticism may be a secondary and even parasitic activity, but at its best it is invaluable in aiding that self-comprehension on which really sustained and serious writing depends.

It seems to me that Cambridge is particularly well equipped for the cultivation of this critical sense. It is sufficiently remote from literary politics to escape being partisan, and the vocabulary of appreciation it has evolved is one capable of accurately defining the more menacing weaknesses of contemporary writing. That is why I regard it as a good sign that both *Focus* and *The Bridge* are predominantly critical. For, in a situation in which most writers are forgetting how to write, it seems to me urgent to remind readers how to read. We must learn to make again of poetry, the demands which great poetry has always stimulated. First class writing demands a first class audience, and the very depth and comprehensiveness of true literature implies that it should be met and measured by some commensurate act of understanding. That understanding is being slowly stifled by the chorus of mutual admiration that passes for criticism today and only a conscious effort at impartiality can revive it. One hopes that the two ventures I have listed will contribute creditably to any such revival.

With good wishes for the *Briarcliff Quarterly*,

Sincerely yours,

—B. RAJAN
Editor, *Focus*
Trinity College
Cambridge

Vivienne Koch

ESSAY CONTRA ASSAYS IN RIME

Why is it that the critics hate
to laud the new, accomodate
their ancient saws to brave new words
which poets fly like fledgling birds
into the chartless sky of art
where rules of thumb can play no part?

Why must there be the K. Shapiros
who delegate themselves the heroes
of the drama they have writ
to prove the virtue of their chit
for chatter, ha'penny wares
made of history's tatters and tares?

Why do the pious purveyors of laws
for poesy not examine the cause
of their own betrayals of truth,
of art, before damning the youth—
ful who seek their own demi-urge
wisely rejecting both dynamo et vierge.

Why do the soldierly, cheerio Shapirios
look with such sourness on their superios?
Is it a sin to make poems like jewels
whose delicate patterns demand their own tools
which knowledge and craft and love of the skill
withhold from the clumsy apprentice sans will?

It has never been true in memory's time
(and my memory's good as *his* essay in rime)
that artist and vulgus have walked hand in hand
intoning their love. Like a mock wedding band
which the gay rake doth glisten and twirl
in order to snag the love of pure Pearl

so Mr. S. calls our poets to polish
up on their syntax and to abolish
all words exotic, rare or pedantic
in favor of his own brand of semantic—
strictly monosyllabic non-gibberish
clad in Shapiro, correct basic-English.

What! Exile from honour our Cummings and Spenders
for Mr. Shapiro's hack psyche-menders
who are to do the charnel task
of feeding vulgus in a mask
of brotherhood that is not felt
as inner fire, conscience-welt?

Why should we who love the muse
and honor her in whomever's shoes
she deigns to don for sport, for labor
reject our pleasure in the favor
she has placed on Crane, on Tate
and substitute for joy our hate?

What has the gent from Baltimore got
to feed the mind that they have not
who seek like hard Stevens to make a new line,
or strive like Doc Williams to trepan the mine
of our language for nuggets that keep
their contours intact under time's heavy jeep.

He'd give us instead the praise of Don Adams,
of Brooks, and the Benets and sundry else madams
who pander to tastes formed by *Publisher's Weekly*
and ad-budgets dreamed by the low and the meekly,
who start the ball rolling with winks in their eyes
which may gather green backs in a Pulitzer Prize.

It's all very well to rant and to prate
to urge poet with public communicate
or else poetry's dead of J. Public's scorn
if it isn't already (viz*S) still-born.
But poetry's more than a media-via
'Tween the Bacchus-inspired and the guy with a beer.

I think it good time we revived Plato's Forms
and did-in to death dull De-voto's norms.
Let us reinstate the poet where
he's the sole Prospero castled in air.
True, poets cannot save the race
from atom-bombs or loss of face,

But whose fault is it if their wit
For relativity isn't fit?
When physicists take to Hopkins and Ransom
I'll make my apologies low and handsome
To those who gibe at the poets' "obscurity"
Whenever it threatens their ego-security.

I agree with Professor Van Doren (Mark)
that a poet's a person—a broker, a clerk,
a pansy, a Don Juan, a manic-depressive,
a pater-familias stern and repressive.
So please to remember that *people* write poems
that it isn't just poets who inhabit the homes

for the mentally ill, but bond-salesmen too,
and preachers and teachers and You Know Who!
The thing that counts when poems are involved
is what kind of experience has the poet resolved
in terms of his medium—words, words, and words.
Just that; he needn't be psychic à la M. Gerald Heard.

A good poem is a thing alone
with inner autonomy, a king on a throne.
Firm is its sway when sound and sense
unite to create new experience
when each part is perfect, each comma and capital,
and yet inter-acting like armies in battle

where conflict engenders both drama and noise
but unseen controls can achieve equipoise,
where each soldier supports an invisible goal
whose nature derives from the men as a whole.
Thus, a poem is more than the sum of its parts.
It's the tensions in stasis, the pricks and the darts

it makes upon language, that corpus so cold,
so empty of vigor, until one who is bold—
the poet—informs it with his own breath
and moulds bright beauty from rigid death.
A poem's a free gift begotten by care,
cost, and love from the beating heart's wear.

L'Envoi

So down with traducers of poesy's excellence
in this grim era of dullards and cents



PORTRAIT OF LEO STEIN

Picasso
(Courtesy of the Cone Collection)

Анастасия
"Крестница"



Сцена 1. Анастасия

17. 12

A DRAWING for a scene in Ivan The Terrible

Sergei Eisenstein
(Courtesy of Sov-Foto)

and down with the poets who want to be middle-men
(I suspect it's because they know they're just piddle-men.)
Thus, if "difficult" poetry be a dark crime
It's the top mercy-killing contrived in our time.

Better a perfect crime in art
than atom bombs which invade the heart
of men both in peace and years
of war, infecting with fears
the young and the old and
even the ageless asses who scold
our poets, our princes, our very best men
for braving new worlds with the point of a pen.

AUSTRALIAN LETTER

Poetry
Lucindale
South Australia

Dear Mr. Macleod:

We are still horrified out here by the atomic bomb. Some of us believe that when we have begun to think calmly we shall regard the use of it against the crowded city of Hiroshima as the greatest atrocity of the war. The Australian, Professor Oliphant, one of the inventors, declared that if the scientists had had any say it would never have been used against a city but against such military objectives as the Tokio Naval dockyards. "Now," he continued, "we have no moral right to complain about its being dropped on London or New York. We await eagerly the statement promised by the scientists who, we understand, are resolutely opposed to any other than international control of the production of the bomb. Perhaps the time has come, as Bertrand Russell said it would, for the scientists to take charge of the world. I, myself, would welcome such a unifying hegemony, for at least scientists believe in reason, which rejects the indigestible myths of the politicians and the statesmen. The worst effect of the bomb will be on us, the users. A deep unconscious sense of guilt will make us sin cruelly against one another in search of punishment. As if the Christian taboo on sex didn't make us cruel enough!

The dreadful condition of our P.O.W. back from Japanese prison camps and the accounts of the cruelties they suffered have exacerbated an already passionate hatred of the Japanese throughout Australia. As Köhler said of the herd-cry his apes raised against the evildoer, the disapprobation is often most violent coming from those who "knew nothing and saw nothing of the occurrence." (One of our poets wrote me recently that nothing was too bad for the Japs. He

thoroughly approved of wiping out Hiroshima.) However, some of the prisoners themselves, for instance, Brig. Blackburn, V. C., and Sergeant Blain, a member of our Federal Parliament, have exhorted us to seek above all the careful re-education of the Japanese people.

You probably know that our booksellers have not been able to get stocks from overseas during the war, and that consequently Australian publishers have been making hay while the sun has shone. Now the Australian Fellowship of Writers is trying to persuade the Federal Parliament to ban or curtail the importation of light literature, syndicated tripe and the like. Without such interference our writers have little chance of making a living, since our papers don't give a damn for culture and would be well pleased to go back to their old practice of buying printing rights of the vilest syndicated stuff for a few shillings.

I have learned that the Commonwealth Literary Fund Board has accumulated £10,000 which it could spend this year in assisting deserving writers. But I think it will do little good with all its cash. The Board has a lot of us puzzled. It makes some strangely generous grants, and yet none of our literary periodicals receives a penny from it. It refused to give assistance to *Poetry* and the *Jindyworobak Anthology* because "it is not the Board's policy to subsidize private publications." As if there were any public ones! Still, we are grateful that it has brought out the Pocket Library editions of a few good Australian books such as *Manshy* by Frank Dalby Davison and *The Passage* by Vance Palmer and granted Fellowships to Xavier Herbert, Brian Vrepon, and Ian Mudie.

Two books of criticism have appeared this year—J. K. Ewar's *Creative Writing in Australia* and H. M. Green's *Fourteen Minutes*, a series of talks on Australian literature given over the air.

The best volumes of verse by Australian soldiers during this war are *Battle Stations* by John Quinn and *Spikenard and Bayonet* by Shawn O'Leary, both small books, the former of which compels interest with its first-hand grim and passionate description of army experience, and the latter with its sensitive pity and lyric sweetness. I expect that each of these writers will have a new book ready soon. One fine anthology of Australian soldiers' verse was compiled by Ian Mudie and published early this year by Georgian House, Melbourne. Every year the Jindyworobak Club offers a £50 prize for the best poem revealing a love of Australia. It doesn't have to be a flag-waving, patriotic diatribe, but it does have to bear evidence that the poet is at home in the Australian natural environment and is awake to our social problems. The 1945 prize has gone to Victor Williams, who contributed some cogent verse to *Jindyworobak Anthologies* a few years ago. The poem has not yet been published.

Mention of Jindyworobak brings me to comment on Mr. Roskolenko's "*Notes on Australian Literature*" printed in your Number 6. There is much in it that most Australian writers would contradict, but I shall touch on what concerns me nearly. "*Poetry*, edited by Flexmore Hudson also falls within the scope of this return to the native." Tommyrot! *Poetry* has published verse by almost every significant writer in Australia and few, if any, of these are concerned with a return to the native. Number 15 *Poetry* opened its pages to all writers in English, Canadian, and American poets including James Franklin Lewis, Langston Hughes, and Gustav Davidson. The trouble is that Mr. Roskolenko is up a wattle (as we say); he doesn't understand the Jindyworobak. It is *not* an Aboriginal school of literature, and it is *not* based on a desire to return to Alcheringa, and nor does Alcheringa mean only the heaven of the Aboriginal. And the only use that the Australia First Party made of it was to publish some

of Rex Ingamell's and Ian Mudie's poems in their magazine *The Publicist*. It is true that some Jindyworobaks were members of the Australia First, but only a few. And in any case the internees, all but one whose case has not yet come on, have just been found guiltless by the Court of Enquiry, liberated and indemnified. The Club was established in 1937 to promote the development of a distinctively national culture. It demanded that Australians look on Australia, not England, as home, and write of Australia, using Australian diction and taking their images from their own country scene. It may seem strange to Americans that Australians should need to be urged to do these things. Unfortunately, the effect of the English courses at the Universities—the English Professors are often called “the English garrison”—has been such that our own literature, coming to grips with the problems of life in our own cities and bush has been sniffed at, and the second rate, imitative drivel, often aping the diction and attitudes of Elizabethans, has reaped a sickening praise. I believe the attitude of our academics was betrayed when Lord Wakehurst, Governor of N.S.W., in an address given to the Australian English Association said blandly: “There has not yet been a long enough hereditary contact with Australian environment for the British Australian to become a native in his new land. The time has not yet come when the kookaburra and the Currawong can altogether be substituted for the thrush and the nightingale or when the imagery of wattle time and the woolshed can altogether take the place of the English spring with the green wood and the primroses, or of the English agricultural cycle with its harvest home.” (*Southerly*, No. 1 of 1945.) This seems nonsense to me. I suspect that the distinguished lord doesn't want us to feel natives of our own land. Perhaps he realizes that a people are a nation just as soon as they feel themselves to be one, and that few things can give that feeling so much as a distinctive national art. Therefore, how deplorable it would be if our poets felt more deeply about Australia than about England!

My own attitude to Jindyworobak I can best sum up by quoting from my preface to the 1943 Anthology which I edited for the founder: “Jindyworobak stands for the use of appropriate Australian diction in Australian verse, for the appreciation of our unique natural environment, for an interest in our land's history, and for a love of its Aborigines. It wants to make us a nation, shaping our own destiny, devoted to the development of art and science. All these things seem good to me, and therefore, until Jindyworobak shows itself xenophobically nationalistic and inimical to *good* overseas influences, I—a Socialist and Internationalist—shall support it and persuade others to support it. However, I do not consider myself a member of a Jindyworobak school.”

Alcheringa, which Mr. Roskolenko mentions, means far more than the Aborigines' “eternal dreamtime.” It has come to mean for certain Jindyworobaks a utopia, a heaven on earth, which they believe our nation will build when it cherishes its own land as the Aboriginal cherishes it. I myself find the conception pretty foggy. Here is what Rex Ingamells means by it (I think Ian Mudie may not mean quite the same thing): “Alcheringa with me is the mysticism of the Australian scene. It inheres in the Australian *earth* and absorbs into itself anything which time and travail make spiritually at home here. Its basic qualities are those of wild nature and Aboriginal life and legend, but it gathers also the spirit and life of the white man in so far as the white man makes a distinctive tradition in this country, the which he cannot do by pretending that only foreign or exotic culture matter. When he knows and loves Australia as a place, he will be able to make Alcheringa a marvellous thing indeed by bringing into it without threatening to destroy it.” Thanks to the Movement a great amount of good Australian verse has been published—some of it most subtle, e.g. that

by William Hart-Smith. It has pressed for the establishment of a chair of Australian Literature, for there is none yet. Adelaide University has appointed Mr. B. Elliot to give a short course of lectures in Australian Literature each year. In each of the other Universities, Australian writers (a different one each year) are given their chance of stating their valuation of our literature.

The Ern Malley hoax gave us a good laugh, which the prosecution quickly wiped from our faces. I know of only one worthwhile Australian writer who was taken in by the fakes, even though the hoaxers salted their duffer well with striking imagery. I think what most of us felt has been told by the poet Kenneth Slessor who, when referring to indignities suffered recently by Australian artists, said, "I feel I can mention the case of Mr. Max Harris, for whose ideas and methods of expressing them I haven't the faintest sympathy. I think his views on poetry are entirely misguided. . . . But my indignation and sense of revulsion were just as great as those of any of Mr. Harris' warmest admirers when I read the news that Mr. Harris had been fined in a police court for what a police magistrate considered an indecent publication." But it was no good protesting when the case came on; we should have set about changing the law long ago.

However, we had another good laugh when Mr. Roskolenko and Miss Elizabeth Lambert compiled for *Voices* (U.S.A.) what they considered a representative selection of Australian contemporary verse, neglecting or rejecting the work of many of our accepted best writers but including the solemn gibble-gabble of the mythical Ern Malley.

Please accept my congratulations on your splendid achievement in publishing *Briarcliff Quarterly* and my best wishes for your personal well-being.

—W. F. FLEXMORE HUDSON

SOUTHERLY ON ROSKOLENKO

The University of Sydney

The Editorial & Publication Director

The Briarcliff Quarterly

Dear Sir:

Harry Roskolenko, in your July number, writes of *Southerly*, "put out by the English Association of Sydney University," as "a scholarly and somewhat pedantic magazine." "Many Yank soldiers," he continues, "have been published in it." Whether any connection is intended between the two sentences I do not know, but the one would seem to belie the other. (Incidentally, 2nd Officer Roskolenko was not published in *Southerly*!) I should like to ask him, however, what he means by "pedantic." He might also supply an illustration.

Furthermore, it is necessary to set him right on a matter of fact. The English Association is not a Sydney University body, but is an English Association in the linguistic sense, with its headquarters in London. *Southerly* is the magazine of its Sydney branch. The connection of this magazine with

Sydney University lies only through its members and the editorship. The contributors are drawn from all over Australia. This means that the contents are not confined to "scholarly and somewhat pedantic" matter, if I understand what Roskolenko means.

One other statement in Roskolenko's article calls for comment. "For the first time in Australia," he says, "a Chair of Contemporary Australian Literature has been founded under the lectureship of Brian Elliott of Adelaide University." My friend, Mr. Elliott, is Lecturer in Australian Literature at Adelaide University. There is no Chair of Contemporary Australian Literature there. If there were I should rejoice with Roskolenko.

—R. G. HOWARTH
Editor of *Southerly*

CORRECTION FROM REXROTH

(Anent *Rexroth on Savage* in *Briarcliff Quarterly*, No. 7): (1) Seems to me that Derek is somebody else, not Savage. 2) I think a better list of Catholic personalism could be compiled without much trouble. 3) I think Henry Miller is a very great writer, and I consider him a very good friend, and I have no desire to antagonize him. There are all too few of us as it is. 4) It should be *Nuptial Mass*, not *Marriage Rite*.

—KENNETH REXROTH

AUSTRALIA BURNS MAGAZINES

Reed & Harris
48 Queen Street
Melbourne, Victoria

Dear Mr. Macleod:

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd August.

We all very much appreciate your attitude towards distribution of *Briarcliff Quarterly* in Australia and can assure you of our full cooperation.

Unfortunately we find ourselves up against a very difficult proposition. Nothing can be imported from America without a License, and the copies you sent us have been seized and are to be destroyed as "Prohibited Import" with the exception of a certain number of your No. 4 issue which we managed to get released without a Licence.

We have applied for an over-all Licence, but our Application has been rejected. The official reason is the need to conserve dollar exchange, unofficially the lack of literary merit. At this end we will do everything we can to fight this attitude, and we urge that at your end you should protest through those channels which are concerned with cultural relationships between your country and ours.

—JOHN REED

BOOKS

William Mead

NEW DOMINION

Le Surréalisme et la Peinture, suivi de Genèse et Perspective Artistiques du Surréalisme et de Fragments Inédits, by André Breton. New York: Les Editions Françaises Brentano's, 1945. \$7.50.

During the last few years the work of the Surrealists has secured increasing prominence everywhere. While one after another the movements in which artists put their faith in the between-two-wars period have demonstrated their inadequacy and have been abandoned, Surrealism has not ceased to grow, to strengthen itself, to broaden its perspective, and to deserve the respect and admiration both of those who are connected with it and who simply know of it. Today, as a result of this dropping-out process, Surrealism is seen to occupy a unique and almost central position in the artistic world: and it has long since gone beyond the stage at which it was merely one movement among many. But strangely enough, as this book shows us, it has not so much gained this position for itself as held it. The reader of these essays will find that since the early days Surrealism has not departed from its basic conceptions, has not sacrificed any of its basic deals. He will find also that Surrealism has unceasingly applied itself to the extension of the vision these conceptions and ideals represented; and that their effort has not, as he may have supposed, been removed from his life, but intimately, necessarily concerned with it. But above all he will feel—if he is impressed in such a way—that he could have become convinced of this at any time during the past fifteen years, if he had known how.

Why is this? Perhaps because, strictly speaking, there is no Surrealist "movement." For if Surrealism has any one principle that is more important than all its others, it is a constant emphasis upon individual liberty, upon personal conception, and upon the use of the freest techniques, such as automatic writing. *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture* collects in one volume two long and several short essays written by M. Breton from time to time since 1928. The first article, from which the collection takes its name, was written in the so-called "heroic" days of the movement, and the second in 1941, as a preface to the *Art of This Century* catalogue. Both analyze and evaluate the various contributions of the artists who have connected themselves with the movement. Both attempt to give a clear statement of the Surrealist objectives and a full exposition of its advances. And in these studies of individual artists, M. Breton is consistently explicit on one particular point: that their value resides in the very fact that they paint as *individuals*: that although their work is Surrealist, it is so because they call it so; for each man would paint as he paints whether a Surrealistic movement existed or not. This perhaps is the greatest reason for the strength of the movement. Being in the last analysis independent of all theories, even its own, it has the dynamism of spontaneous generation. And it has the advantage of being able to practice what it preaches.

For it does preach. The Surrealist movement is a movement of reform, or, rather, of re-discovery. Nor is their work created so much for itself that it

keeps others from participating in its discoveries. Preoccupied with an expression of the world he has found within and beyond the limits of conventional reality, the Surrealist must hope not only to create belief in his vision but to destroy, or at least shake, belief in the insufficient reality over which he has triumphed. And if he succeeds in convincing, then a similar process must be continued. After he convinces, he disturbs again, then convinces, then disturbs, always attempting to give man a freer and more essential consciousness of himself and his surroundings. Thus his art serves as a sort of catalyst, and plastic expression is not a theory-in-itself, but a means-to-an-end.

It is not to be supposed however that Surrealist painting even as a means is insignificant. In these essays M. Breton discusses in detail the technical problems which confronted and confront the Surrealist; and demonstrates that their devotion to their art has been no less pure than their devotion to their ideals. For Surrealist art is, after all, the essential component of the Surrealist vision. Perhaps Breton expressed this best himself when, in another work, he said: "The Surrealist cause, in art as in life, is the cause of liberty itself. Today, more than ever, to say that one knows liberty abstractly or to praise it in conventional terms is to serve it ill. To light the world, liberty must be made flesh, and for that constantly reflect itself and recreate itself in the word."

And the motto of the surrealists, if they cared for mottos, might be a phrase of Seneca's: *Dic eis non quod volunt audire, sed quod audisse semper volent.*

TAME DEVIL

The Devil's Share. By Denis de Rougemont. New York: Pantheon Books. \$2.50.

To me, Nicola Chiaramonte, in his review of the present book (*View*, May, 1945), has satisfactorily proved that "it offers us the image of a Devil far too tame for our disturbed consciences." To subscribe to this judgment is to anticipate the relatively final impact of *The Devil's Share*. "Relatively" means with reference to myself; not necessarily, of course, to other readers. "Relatively final" implies that after more time the impact may appear to be yet different from now, and that my first impression was clearly distinguished from the present one. The first impression, to which I gave myself up in a kind of voluptuous, one might even say devilish, abandon, was that the book is a terrible message which I, and we, have to accept and follow, or else live on contributing to the further doom of the world.

The message is that we must recognize the Devil behind his incognitos ("The Devil is only a myth, hence he does not exist," says the rationalist; "The Devil is a myth, hence he exists and continues to be active," answers M. de Rougemont. The more the Devil prevails in our lives the less are we able to recognize him), and act accordingly. I found it less important that the author, in his rather sparse counsels as to *how* we ought to live, falls back on formulas which have proved to be unworkable (but because we have been led astray by the Devil, he would say), such as the sanctity of marriage—already in his *Love in the Western World* this was an unsatisfactory answer to the difficulties of romantic love—, and the small community (the old "shame of the cities"); in fact, as regards those parts of the book, one might be tempted simply to dispose of him as a reactionary.

De Rougemont, no doubt, is exceptionally well-read in the more despairing theologians, philosophers and poets, medieval and modern, but although he quotes from them gems of insight into our time and uses them to indicate the direction

in which he and we ought to look, his program, beyond an appeal, however stirring, to our moral sense, remains as meager as I have indicated. For instance, he quotes Rimbaud's profound paraphrase of Descartes, "I believe myself to be in Hell, therefore I am," but he does not integrate the passage over which this quotation is inscribed with either his own accusation or with his remedy. This and some other sections of the book would lead one to classify him as a brilliant and poetic conversationalist, reminding us of the lost possibilities of an assured culture which could afford the intellectual and spiritual luxuries of the salon—brilliant but, today, unobliging.

But as I say, neither this characterization nor that of a reactionary appeared to me important because the book, no doubt, is permeated by a compelling preoccupation with the moral fate of modern man. This preoccupation enables us to forget the trimmings of de Rougemont's Devil formula and to be reminded of the cloth out of which such other analyzers or prophets as Kierkegaard or Kafka or Nietzsche or the more closely related Heidegger (in his earlier period) were cut. If this reminder produced the immediate impact of the book, a more detached reflection upon its contents (detachment became possible!) led to the second, the relatively final one. De Rougemont's Devil is too tame, as Chiaromonte says; or, the message is terrible, but we can no longer hear it; not because we are hopelessly lost, as de Rougemont himself would infer from this statement (which he couldn't accept at its face value, however) but, I venture to hope, because the author, in contrast to us, is unaware of the moral implications of modern communication and transportation, and, more particularly, of social science, especially anthropology and sociology. These moral implications, to be sure, have not yet been made explicit. I think they will have to be soon because it would be naive to daydream that the objective or relativistic or "non-participating" attitude which has been engendered by worldwide contacts and which is exemplified (on the whole) by social science is nothing but desirable. How can it be in the face of the unprecedentedly ubiquitous and incredibly fast-spreading moral deprivation of the world?

But the way to avoid the disaster wrought by the atomic bomb is not to kill its inventors but to use it for beneficial purposes. The crucial question, of course, is what these beneficial purposes are and how they can be realized. Our great and rapid increase in the understanding of culture and society is only beginning to reveal this. De Rougemont is quicker; but we cannot accept his revelation because we have at least learned that mere preaching, however inspired, is not an effective vehicle of communication in our mass society. We may as well face the grave fact that though it may change our Sundays, preaching does not dominate our week, and that changes which spiritualize our weekdays can, in my opinion, no longer come from the pulpit.

—KURT H. WOLFF

No Voice Is Wholly Lost: Writers and Thinkers in War and Peace. By Harry Slochower. New York: Creative Age Press. \$3.75.

Mr. Slochower's book is one of several recent attempts to bring to the surface confusion of twentieth-century culture some semblance of order and interpretation. Such a task is always beset by doubt and risk, and it frequently demands what one might call intellectual courage; for, intellectual history is different from other forms of history in not submitting easily to the discipline of chronology and in demanding subtler and bolder forms of organization.

The plan is perhaps the most interesting feature of his book; the table of contents reveals a quick and fertile mind, ordering its subjects and putting them in line with remarkable skill. The plan is guided by the principal question of our century: What is the relationship of writers and thinkers to the ideologies of our day, which have linked World War I with World War II? With this question in mind, Mr. Slochower discusses first of all the advent of individualism and anarchism and the position of the "bohemian" intellectual in Western culture ("The Surrender of Absolutes"); secondly, he tries to show the consequences of this individualism upon our post-war culture—what amounts almost to the helplessness of writers in the face of confusion, and their efforts to find some kind of order for their thoughts and acts and some suitable haven for their loyalties ("The Embrace of Absolutes"); finally, the author gives us his own version of a cultural synthesis.

In the union—somehow imposed and enforced—of Freudian psychology with Marxist economics, Mr. Slochower sees a resolution of the problem of our culture. The spiritual helplessness of dozens of writers, who had mislaid their beliefs in the twenties and had loved doubt and uncertainty for their own sakes, is relieved by the appearance of a forceful and systematic philosophy of social dynamics. Condemning fascist ideology as a skillful marshalling of the forces of evil, the author describes the progress of the writer toward a final realization of social responsibility. Marxism is for him the most persuasive of all ideologies, because it is most suitable to the needs of the modern mind: "It differs from the systems of Catholicism, fascism, and other absolutistic frameworks by a more radical transformation of both the older concept of tradition and the newer modes of liberation" (p. 263). Mr. Slochower suggests that the aims of psychoanalysis and Marxism do not necessarily exclude each other: what psychoanalysis achieves by means of its therapy, Marxism supplements—the individual, made aware of the demands of society through psychoanalysis, may well accept the Marxist suggestions for a society which will make his adjustment permanently satisfactory. Thus these two bodies of theory somehow collaborate—the one pointing the way to psychic health, the other underlining the importance of social and economic health. All of this argument suggests to the reader a new interpretation of good and evil: good is more clearly equivalent to "social good," if not to "social *goods*"; evil is interpreted to mean something not unlike illness, a psychic illness, for the cure of which we may at least hopefully turn to psychoanalysis.

So much for the plan. It is not an altogether new idea, but it is bold in its inception and forthright in its development. However, this is after all a book about "Writers and Thinkers in War and Peace," and there are few of them who are neglected. But the really disappointing fact is that they are always kept carefully within the limits and made the servants of the plan itself. One can scarcely turn to this book for a clear analysis of the writings of our day—for they are made to appear secondary to the purposes of the historian. The unfortunate consequences of such a method can be seen in such places as the study of Aldous Huxley. One might argue that Huxley is easy game for the intellectual historian, that he is himself a kind of informal historian of the ideas of his time. Yet it would seem only fair that his work be considered in its entirety; and, if Mr. Slochower had so considered him, he would not have fitted so neatly into the scheme of the book. Essentially this is true of almost every other writer whom the author discusses—though some of them adjust themselves more accurately to his plan than others. He is most successful when he considers such men as Thomas Mann and Franz Kafka, whom he has studied so carefully as to be almost an authority on their works.

Inevitably perhaps, Mr. Slochower's method, as well as his type of intellect, leads to quick generalizations; these are given authority not by an appeal to evidence but by their association with the primary assumptions of the book. The author demonstrates at once courage and a certain indifference, almost a scorn, of evidence. As a result, the reader has often to accept his generalizations as appropriate only to the book itself and interesting only as convictions which its author holds. For the most part, also, the style is difficult and heavy—often much more difficult than the ideas which he wishes to analyze. The work is guilty of many violations of correct usage, and the value of its generalizations is often weakened by confused and unidiomatic metaphors.

No Voice is Wholly Lost is provocative and challenging. Its principal contribution to criticism and intellectual history is that it offers a demonstration of the use of literature for purposes of philosophical and cultural interpretation. The debate over its real value must rest therefore on the validity of such an interpretation.

—FREDERICK J. HOFFMAN

Philosophy in American Education. By Brand Blanshard, Curt J. Ducasse, Charles W. Hendel, Arthur E. Murphy, Max C. Otto. New York: Harper and Brothers. \$3.00.

In the 5th century B.C. in Athens Socrates attempted to formulate the meaning of education. Then as now, discussion on this theme was marked by conflicting doctrines, by heated defense of one theory at the expense of another. Socrates was sure that if the layers of prejudice in each mind could be removed, if men would examine together their traditional beliefs, they would find basic principles upon which all could agree. The Socratic method has had a multitude of adherents in the long history of human thought. The authors of the present volume are heirs of that noble tradition. Although they do not see to an eye on all issues, their Socratic attitude gives an underlying and sustained harmony to their collective study. The Socratic attitude may be defined as the ever-constant and ever-cherished belief that knowledge is virtue and that knowledge, not in the sense of absolutes but of general principles, may be reached by the collective expression of men willing to think.

This book represents the report by a Commission of five outstanding philosophers to the American Philosophical Association. The subject of the report is the Function of Philosophy in American Education. The authors' wisdom and awareness of present conflicting doctrines in education as well as in political theory and ethics make their work of interest to laymen and professional philosophers alike. Their study draws from the counsel of philosophers, poets, lawyers, editors, business men and officers of the government, which necessitated "a philosophical pilgrimage of some seven thousand miles."

The opinions of many conferees led to these conclusions: our graduates have a fair stock of information, but it is fragmentary and badly in need of welding together to become a usable instrument; they have acquired specialized knowledge but scant common awareness of ideas, standards and principles; they must understand better the nature and demands of the democracy of which they are members; lastly, there is a lack of "clarity about the great ends of living, attachment to which gives decision and unity to life." Can philosophy serve to correct this situation?

First we must know what philosophy is. It is both a method of inquiry entailing technical problems and rules of procedure and the collective wisdom of the ages put to use as faith for living. The process of responsible inquiry gives meaning and integrity to philosophy as product or commitment. As comprehensive wisdom which develops from faith in an intelligible world and a moral order, philosophy is everybody's business. But such faiths are often crude, conflicting and incoherent. Therefore it is a specific task of philosophy to clarify and enlighten these faiths by presenting the clearest thinking and broadest knowledge available to the end that ignorance, prejudice and inconsistency may be recognized and overcome. To an unfortunate degree we have lost sight of this basic task and have transformed the "problems of men" into problems for philosophers which in their complex and technical nature transcend the limits of interest and relevancy for "plain men." Beliefs, affirmations, faith for living continue to be needed by "plain men" and if the rational inquiry of philosophy cannot help to formulate and clarify these, the average person will turn to irrational gospels and creeds which are prevalent today. Philosophy must not set itself up as advocate of any one faith. Its task, rather, is to judge, to examine various faiths in order that a mature verdict may be reached. Philosophers have no authority as individuals or oracles to pronounce on men's faiths. The authority which they can claim is "for their subject and for their own conclusions only so far as they can be tested and measured by the best that rational inquiry in this subject has so far achieved." The professional philosopher then does not differ from the "plain man" on the point at which he starts being philosophical, but the point at which he is prepared to stop. The problems of philosophers develop out of the needs and conflicts present in common experience.

The task of philosophy, which is to liberate the individual from bondage to blind impulse and ignorance and to develop in him the capacity to make individual and social decisions wisely and responsibly, is at heart the purpose of liberal education. We are faced now with the problem of how liberal education and vocational or technological education may function together for the greatest benefit. The authors point out that we need both, but this is no reason to confuse the two. One cannot be substituted for the other. The purpose of vocational education, which is education for a skilled job, is obvious. We may avoid unnecessary argument between adherents to one or the other by clearly stating the purpose of liberal education and by indicating how it differs from vocational. The purpose is to liberate the mind of man from passion, impulse, the whim of the moment and to integrate his desires, his interests and capacities with one another through the habit and practice of thinking. Call this self-discipline if you wish. It does not mean the repression of normal impulse but the harmony of various drives and emotions which would prevent a man from becoming the slave of any one of them. Furthermore, liberal education strives to develop that freedom which comes with the possession "of a comprehensive view of the variety of human discoveries, achievements and capacities; and appreciative insight into the typical values for which men live—in short, it means the possession of perspective."

To give perspective to its students is here claimed to be the chief task of a liberal college. Perspective so conceived has two dimensions—depth and breadth, the former is thorough knowledge in a chosen subject or "major"; the latter is a more elementary study of a variety of subjects selected to represent the main fields of human inquiry. The purpose of such perspective is the realization of freedom for the individual which derives from having a choice. Any person, a Nazi soldier indoctrinated with the rigid tenets of Nazism may serve as example, who knows only one interpretation, who understands only one narrow criterion

of values is not free. "To provide this particular kind of perspective is philosophy's distinctive role in liberal education."

One is reminded of Socrates in the dialogue *Laches*. He could formulate what a proper education should strive to give, but where were the teachers fitted for the task? This book meets that question squarely. We must admit that we have not produced teachers of philosophy in sufficient numbers who are capable of assuming the challenge and responsibility that is theirs. Suggestions are offered for their more adequate training and concrete and valuable advice is given for conducting introductory and basic courses in philosophy. This section is more closely related to professional problems of teaching, but the layman may still find enjoyment because his experience, his interests and welfare and also his cooperation are never obscured.

Here is a plea that philosophy play a more vital part in college and community, not as prophet or seer speaking in vague abstractions, but in its historic role which is "to be the intellectual conscience of that community—to measure all special interests, and half-hearted ideals which claim final authority or ultimate validity, by the most penetrating and comprehensive standards of truth and adequacy that can rationally be maintained." If philosophers can take up this challenge and bring to fruition the ideals here presented, we may look on the present scene as "a fresh morning in the life of reason, cloudy but brightening."

—FRANCES B. HARMON

HISTORY

Jessie Treichler

NOTES ON SOME CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN OSCAR WILDE AND CORPORAL MIKE BROWN

Back in 1917 and 1918 troop trains were stopping at Harlowton, Montana, and Flower and Jewel Miller were the two prettiest girls in town. To my twelve-year-old eyes they were the two prettiest girls in the world, and I still think this may have been true. Anyhow they contributed more to the morale of soldiers routed through Harlowton than anyone else in Wheatland county. And through them I was able to make my own small contribution to the war effort.

Because Harlowton is a division point on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, all troop trains stopped there for some ten or fifteen minutes while engines were changed. Since most of us had already spent half our lives watching transcontinental trains come and go, it was the most natural thing in the world for the whole town to turn out during the war days to say hail and farewell to the boys who were shuttling back and forth across the country from Camp Lewis to Camp Dix.

It was patriotic duty, and it was mighty pleasant. The older women of the ladies' aid and the Red Cross unit handed out coffee and doughnuts. The younger women marched up and down beside the coaches, shaking hands with the soldiers, taking their addresses, and promising to write to them. All the little girls my age ran about and yelled and giggled and envied the older girls.

The two girls we envied most were Flower and Jewel. Mrs. Miller had named her daughters for the two leading characters in a paper backed novel. Flower, eighteen and a blonde, had been named for the heroine; Jewel, two years younger, for the dashing brunette who had tried to wreck Flower's life. Together they were an unbeatable combination. Flower could shake hands with a soldier, say something to make him laugh, and get his address all in one movement, it seemed. By the time she had completed the movement, she had the hand of another man, was smiling at him, making him laugh, and getting his address. Jewel was always right behind Flower, and she helped to salve the disappointment of the men Flower left behind her.

After several months of the process, Flower and Jewel didn't have time to do anything but write letters. Their postage bills were enormous, and their daily take at the post office would have raised a lot of movie actresses' salaries. Inevitably they reached the saturation point. Even by pruning the addresses down to the most attractive men, they were still writing forty or fifty letters a day. Finally, no longer able to carry the entire burden on their own shoulders, they began to pass out addresses to others. They even got around to us seventh and eighth graders after a time.

One day, I saw Jewel talking with the most attractive human being I had ever seen in or out of the United States Army—a tall, red-haired soldier with white teeth that flashed in the Montana sunshine when he laughed, which he did most of the time.

After the train had pulled out, I edged up to Jewel. "Say, Jewel, do you want me to take an address?" I asked.

"I sure do," she said, giving me an encouraging hug. "Flo and I can't keep up this pace—we're just about dead, and I'm getting writer's cramp."

"Well, I might take the address of that red-haired man you just talked to, if it's all the same to you."

She gave one of my braids a little pull. Flower came up, and Jewel told her I wanted the address of the red-haired boy. Flower burst out laughing.

"You've got good taste, honey," she said. "He's the best looking thing on that train. I even remember his name. It's Corporal Mike Brown."

Sure enough she had a Corporal Mike Brown on her list, and a double-x after his name to remind her that he was something special when she started to write to him. He was in a Company D of an infantry regiment stationed at Camp Lewis in Washington.

That evening I started my first draft of a letter to Corporal Mike Brown. I don't remember now everything I wrote to him, but I remember a good bit. I should, for I rewrote the letter at least twenty times in the next three nights before I finally copied it off in my best Palmer method on a sheet of my mother's best Christmas-gift correspondence paper. I had done a great deal of reading beyond my years, mostly to impress my teachers, and I relied heavily on this reading to give my letter a properly adult tone. And I relied on quotations rather heavily, too.

The salutation gave me considerable trouble. I wasn't sure of the correct military form. Finally I decided that the best thing to do would be to write "Dear Corporal Mike Brown," and use a comma instead of a colon. And I still think my opening sentences were pretty good for a twelve-year-old for all they were a bit on the relaxed side. "I have long been tempted to write to a soldier," I wrote, "and I have come to agree with Oscar Wilde that the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. After hearing you described, this is easy to do."

After that fine bold beginning, I retreated into fictitious history. My mother was very, very strict with me, and never allowed me out without a chaperone, I wrote. This made it difficult for me to get to talk with the troops personally. A friend had smuggled Mike Brown's address to me and described him in detail. "She said you were tall and very handsome and had pretty red hair and wonderful teeth," I wrote.

I came to an impasse on the subject of my mother's strict chaperonage, since not even my imagination could turn her into Cerberus; but I finally got around it by falling back again on Wilde, a very useful fellow. "Children begin by loving their parents," I wrote cryptically. "As they grow older they judge them; sometimes they forgive them."

Well, the letter was four pages in length, and I cannot reconstruct it all from this distance. I'm sure that it was extraordinarily witty and literate in spots, since few are wittier and more literate than Oscar Wilde. I closed the letter in my own words, offering to be Corporal Mike Brown's faithful correspondent.

I was proud of the whole job. After I posted the letter, I went home and looked at myself in a mirror for a long time. I pulled my stomach in beneath my middy blouse. I wound my hair around my head in a halo effect. And now and then there was almost a moment when the braces on my teeth did not get between the twelve-year-old me and the dream author of eighteen.

The answer I got to my letter showed me that even in the United States Army there were cads, and that a man might have pretty red hair and wonderful teeth and still have a heart of tin. For the answer came from a Lieutenant Howard Kirk, who wrote that there was no Corporal Mike Brown in Company D of the infantry regiment on the address, never had been, and, if he had his way after reading my letter, never would be. "If there's one thing I cannot abide," wrote the Lieutenant pettishly, "it's a man with pretty red hair." In other words, he regretted to tell me, there was a heel hidden somewhere in their midst who went around giving false names and addresses to pretty girls, and he was afraid the too handsome young man with the wonderful teeth who had said he was Corporal Mike Brown was the man.

But his letter, after pulling me down, lifted me right up. For Howard Kirk, in the handsomest fashion, offered himself in place of the missing Brown as my faithful correspondent. He, too, read Oscar Wilde; and it would be a pleasure he hoped I would not deny him to carry on a literate correspondence with a girl who had no contact with life except through books.

I was charmed. Even I knew that a lieutenant ranked a corporal; and while I couldn't entirely forget Mike Brown's red hair, I took a snobbish satisfaction in thinking that my letter would have been above his understanding. What Lieutenant Kirk might lack in personal beauty I felt sure he made up for in sensibility. I edged *The Picture of Dorian Gray* out of my brother's bookcase again and set to work.

The Lieutenant answered the second letter. This didn't surprise me then, though it does now as I think back upon the letters I wrote. He sent me a snapshot. I still have it. It's a trifle blurred, but it's all right. Lieutenant Kirk was no slouch himself, and he had a mustache. He wanted a snapshot of me. This didn't bother me at all. I sent him a posed photograph my cousin, Nellie Cambron, had sent us for Christmas. Nellie at nineteen was the prettiest of all the Cambron girls, and that was saying something.

I knew that picture would be a clincher—and it was. Lieutenant Kirk wrote that he had a leave coming up, and he asked whether he could spend it in Harlowton. Would my mother object to his seeing me? Should he write a formal note to her?

Events had moved too fast for me. I thought of taking Flower and Jewel into my confidence, and asking Jewel, who looked a little like Nellie, to pose as me for a few days. But I knew that if the story ever got out in Harlowton, I'd never be able to play run sheep run or pitch horseshoes again with my playmates. And I knew that, kind as Flower and Jewel were, you could never expect older girls to keep a story like that to themselves.

Finally I told my mother. I have loved her doubly ever since because she never once suggested that I write and tell Lieutenant Kirk that I was twelve, that I wore my hair in pigtails, and that I had braces on my teeth. Instead she sat down and wrote him a note which she let me help compose. She said that she had accidentally learned of the clandestine correspondence I was carrying on with him, and that, not even in the name of patriotism, could it continue. She said that she was considering sending me to an eastern convent immediately. I wanted her to say she was actually sending me, but it took diplomacy even to make Mother consider the convent. She closed, without benefit of Oscar Wilde, very truly his.

Before Mother sealed the letter she had written, she looked over one he had written to me.

"I really ought to do something else about this," she said. "He seems like such a nice fellow. You should never have sent him that picture of Nellie. Anybody'd fall in love with Nellie's picture. Still, Nellie's engaged to a nice boy, and he's a soldier, too, and if I told Lieutenant Kirk who she was so he could write to her instead, it would just mix things up."

"Why don't you tell him if he wants to write to me after a year's up, he can do that, and you'll see about it then?" I suggested. "That would break the fall."

"Perhaps I should," Mother said. She thought for a few minutes, and then added a postscript to the letter. "I don't suppose it would make him feel a bit good for me to tell him he's been taken in by a little goose," she added, looking stern.

Lieutenant Kirk wrote three more letters during the next week. My mother wrote, "Returned unopened," across all of them, and sent them back to him. I rather wanted her to steam them open and read them first, but she wouldn't consent to that. I didn't mind much. Lieutenant Kirk was only an intellectual problem to me then instead of the nice guy I now see he probably was. But he didn't write at the end of the year.

NOTE TO LIBRARIANS:

We regret that the pagination of number 7, **Briarcliff Quarterly**, was in error. Pages should read from 129 to 192 rather than from 65 to 128.

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NOTES

The *Briarcliff Quarterly*, which is edited and managed by students under the direction of Norman Macleod of the English faculty and published by Briarcliff Junior College, is an international review of literary and general intellectual interest. The student staff learn the techniques of assembling material, editing and proof-reading, publicity and distribution, magazine make-up and management, and establish for themselves, in their editorial capacity, literary and critical standards. Conceived as an integral part of the creative writing program at Briarcliff, the magazine includes such student literature as can exemplify standards of professional excellence.

All of the material in this issue (with the exception of literary intelligence, history and book reviews) has been assembled and edited by WILLIAM MEAD, of the University of Maryland and former associate editor of the *Maryland Quarterly*. ANDRE GIDE's work is being widely circulated throughout America in the form of reprints issued by French houses in Canada and Brazil. JULES ROMAINS will publish the concluding volumes of *Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté* sometime in 1946 or 1947. DENIS DE ROUGEMONT'S latest book is *Les Personnes du Drame*, published by Pantheon. LOUIS ARAGON, outstanding Resistance leader and poet of heroic proportions, is at present editor of *Ce Soir*, Paris. JEAN MALAQUAIS has been living in Mexico during the war. His *Journal de Guerre* appeared in both French and English early in 1944. LOYS MASSON'S *Thomas Wilson* is in *Poesie* 45, number 24. ANDRE SPIRE is at work on an important new book on the theory of poetry. JEAN WAHL recently returned to the Sorbonne to assume the position of Professor of Philosophy. PIERRE EMMANUEL'S *Lot's Daughters* appeared originally in *Fontaine* 33. PAUL ELUARD founded in clandestinity the *Eternelle Revue*. One of his latest works is *Medieuses*, published by the N.R.F. Some of PIERRE-JEAN JOUVE'S poetry is translated in the 1942 *New Directions*. JEAN CASSOU, associated before the war with the *Maison de la Culture* in Paris, is an authority on Spain. PAUL CLAUDEL'S *Coronal*, French and English text, can be obtained from Pantheon. SAINT-JOHN PERSE'S *Lettre à L'Etrangère* is a recent poem. Late in 1945 his *Anabase* was reissued by Brentano's in format de luxe. The death of PAUL VALERY in the summer of 1945 deprived poetry of one of its purest representatives. FRANCOIS MAURIAC'S *Journal*, originally published by Grasset, was reprinted last winter by *Les Editions Variétés*, Montreal. JULES SUPERVIELLE has been living in South America. JEAN PAULHAN was an active member of the Resistance Movement. GEORGES BERNANOS' *Reflexions sur le Cas de Conscience Français* has just appeared in the *Editions de la Revue Fontaine*, in Algiers. PIERRE SEGHERS is director of *Poesie* (Paris). DENIS DEVLIN'S translation of Saint-John Perse's *Rains* has been included by *The Nation* and *The New Republic* in their lists of significant books for 1945. HERBERT STEINER was editor of *Corona*, major German-language literary review, published in exile in Switzerland. FLEXMORE HUDSON is editor of *Poetry* (Lucindale, South Australia). VIVIENNE KOCH teaches at Columbia University. FRANK JONES, now with U. S. Army in Germany, formerly taught at Yale University. WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR, of U. S. Army, is stationed in Manila. B. RAJAN is editor of *Focus*, Trinity College, Cambridge.

The editors would like to thank the editors of *Fontaine* and of *Poesie* for their valuable assistance in the preparation of this number.